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Fraternities of the field

By Richard Cobb

RICHARD HOLT:
Sport and Society in Modern France
256pp, Macmillan, £20.
0 333 25951 3

On his second visit to France, in the summer of 1789, Arthur Young noted in his journal that, throughout the countryside, from Dijon down towards the Midi, came the sound of guns popping off, as peasants and townsmen blazed away merrily at everything in sight, often with severe damage to their fellow-citizens. He rightly concluded that this was the most cherished privilege brought by the recent Revolution. Some fifty years later, the government of Louis-Philippe fixed the *permis de chasse* at 25 francs, and, in the same year, 1844, approximately 125,000 such *permis* were issued, a figure more or less equivalent to that of the electoral roll. Six years later, it had risen to 150,000; and by the end of the Second Empire, this had doubled.

Weekend shooting, especially in the Ile-de-France and on the outskirts of other large towns, had become a sufficiently popular leisure activity among clerks and shopkeepers for it to have provided Daumier with a whole series of caricatures on the subject of the perils of *la chasse* and of the inflated language of the urban Sunday *chasseur* (on the subject of which, a perceptive English observer, later in the century, suggested that *beaucoup de* could be translated as "one", *une confusion de*, as "two"). By 1900, there were about two thousand rifle clubs in existence, and, in the 1920s, there were well over a million licensed guns. By the outbreak of the Second World War, the figure had stabilized at around 2 million and has remained at roughly that level ever since. Only in Italy are there as many *chasseurs*.

As Richard Holt suggests, in this perceptive and extremely amusing study, there is an ambivalence about the French word *la chasse*, and its derivative, *chasseur*, that does not exist in England, because, in French, it makes no clear distinction between shooting and hunting. As shooting became more and more democratic, offering the clerk, the shop assistant, and the minor bureaucrat, the artisan, the tradesman and the shopkeeper the agreeable masculine illusion that he was providing for himself and for his family from the limited stocks of the countryside, the sport became less and less exclusive, though, in the best hunting lands (*les terres giboyeuses*), in the Berri, Touraine, Burgundy, the Ile-de-France, and Upper Normandy, good shoots continued to provide a form of upward social mobility to the new rich, to bankers and industrialists. *La Règle du Jeu* could reasonably be located in the Rambouillet area or in the Cher.

With the democratization of shooting, the old nobility and its more recent adjuncts took refuge more and more in deer and stag-hunting, and, in the Ardennes, in that of the wild boar. To distinguish themselves from the vast army of *chasseurs*, those who followed the once-royal pursuits of hunting began to call themselves *veneurs*. According to Dr Holt, there are some forty such hunts still in existence in France, most of them in the wooded and forest areas of the Ile-de-France, as well as in the East and the North-East. The *veneurs* have managed to retain their exclusiveness thanks to the enormous costs involved in maintaining a pack, acquiring a uniform of green faced with black, and assuring such essential trimmings as the annual *messe de Saint-Hubert* (an ancient *regime* practice revived by one of the French Rothschilds) and the enormous suppers that constituted one of the rewards of the successful *veneur*; the other, presumably, would be to end up, as in the words of the song, "dans le lit de

la Marquise". Indeed, apart from the costs and class distinctions, the other principal difference between the two forms of hunting would be that *la chasse* was exclusively masculine (and was indeed, and still is, appreciated as such), whereas stag-hunting could accommodate both sexes. One of the most celebrated huntswomen of the first thirty years of the present century was the redoubtable Duchesse d'Uzes, who combined fanatical royalist convictions with an immense appetite for hunting.

The author suggests, in the opening sections of his book, that the social history of sport and of increasingly mass forms of leisure has up till now hardly tempted professional historians, though he acknowledges his debt to the pioneering work of Eugen Weber. His book was already in proof at the time of the publication last year of the excellent evocative memoirs of Robert Laget, Union by David Smith and Gareth Williams. He sets out most successfully to fill this gap, though he makes it clear that his study is not intended to include every form of sport practised in France. Fencing, for instance, so much favoured as a school of gentility for their shop assistants, by the directors and owners of the Bon Marche, is only briefly referred to, there is little on wrestling (*le catch*, *la lutte libre*) for which one needs to refer to the highly evocative memoirs of Robert Laget, and fishing is perhaps too individualistic a sport to be included in a study of mass participation, though in France there are perhaps even more "fanatiques de la gaule" (as Queneau called them) than there are fanatical Sunday *chasseurs*. Holt is principally concerned with association and rugby football, gymnastics, cycling and boxing, and he also has sections on cock-fighting in the area round Roubaix (I wish he had a little more to say about pigeon-fancying in the same area) and on bull-fighting as a predominantly southern sport, especially in the South-West.

Following Weber, he attributes the early French obsession with sport, *le muscle*, and physical prowess, to the disturbing effects of defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. From the start, both gymnastics and rifle-clubs were closely associated with patriotic and *revanchard* sentiments. Ashtons were particularly numerous in the gymnastic societies which spread throughout the East of France and adopted such slightly dotty titles as *Le Réveil*, *Halte-là!*, *La Régénération* (no doubt though than a cycling club rather unfortunately, if, in one sense accurately, named *la Pédale Ouvrière*); these had such obviously nationalistic connotations that, in the 1880s, Belgians were often excluded from membership.

That militarism and gymnastics were closely allied is indicated by the support given to the clubs by suc-

cessive Ministers of War, even if, as the author shows, physical prowess often did not constitute the unofficial attraction of these masculine associations. For many poor young men from the cities, for clerks, reps, salesmen and shop assistants, they were the pretext for a cheap excursion to some other part of France and for a mighty bean-feast on arrival. The State provided travel facilities for such occasions, which ended in noisy drinking sessions. The tight-fitting striped silk outfits might also be a suitable manner to display rippling muscles and advantageous proportions. The young gymnasts of the 1900s, with their moustaches *en guidon*, might have stepped out of a picture by Monet. Even so, they often succeeded in putting on impressive outdoor displays; and the Church was soon converted to a recognition of what, much later, under Vichy, would become "une politique musclee". Soon there were Catholic clubs that were almost as numerous as the officially patronized ones.

Football, both rugby and association, on the other hand, was first introduced to France by upper-class enthusiasts, many of them like the rather bizarre Georges de Saint Clair, one-time French consul in Edinburgh, with first-hand experience of Great Britain. Another even more improbable enthusiast for the mainly virtues of English sport was the former *communist* Pascal Grousset, who, having spent ten years in Devon and Cornwall, had written a number of children's books in English (he had also endeavoured, not very successfully, to teach the future George V the rudiments of French while he was a midshipman at Dartmouth). On his return to France in 1880, Grousset became one of the most powerful advocates of English team-games.

The early clubs, such as Le Racing and Stade Français (of which the reviewer was an active member in the late 1930s) began, and remained for many years, highly elitist, being composed of *lycées* of middle-class and professional families. Members of Le Racing, at one time, even played football in jockey caps, as if to emphasize the quite spurious connection with the prestigious and ultra-exclusive Jockey Club (almost as exclusive as the still surviving Jockey Club de l'Île Maurice). Football spread inland from the Channel ports and from the wool towns of the North-East, the first two clubs were in Le Havre and Roubaix; they then spread to Rouen, Amiens, Barentin, and, eventually, Paris. Their formation was generally due to the initiative of members of the local English colonies: shipping agents in Le Havre, textile engineers in Roubaix-Tourcoing, railway engineers and cotton agents in Rouen.

Rugby too seems to have owed its implantation in France and its localization in the South-West to the

existence of colonies of retired Indian civil servants in such places as Pau — long believed, together with Montpellier (hence the rash of Montpellier Crescents in English towns) to be the most salubrious town in France — Biarritz, and Bayonne. The game then spread northwards, to be taken up by anglophile or Anglo-French circles of the Bordeaux upper-crust, Quai des Chartres, and both in Bayonne and Bordeaux, it was at first combined with rowing, as a summer alternative (hence the name of one of the most famous clubs of the South-West, L'Aviron bayonnais, which certainly has not seen an oar for years). As Holt perceptively comments, the French map of rugby (and of *le rugbyman*) corresponds quite closely to various forms of South-Western separatism with its traditions of "communalism" of intense municipal pride and self-love, and of equally intense municipal rivalries between the small towns of l'Océanie, much of it dating from the eighteenth century.

In this part of France, rugby has given national fame and a tremendous sense of collective pride to such tiny market-towns as Quillan and Gujan-Mestras, in both of which the leading figures of the game were café owners. The final between Montpellier and Sète in 1929 was attended by the President of the Republic, Gaston Doumergue, himself a Protestant from the South-West. Rugby has remained quite narrowly localized, reaching up as far as Rodez, but failing to reach Marseille. It has become an integral, almost physical, part of a sense of identity of the Basque, a Béarnais, a Gascon, a Catalan, or a Rouerguaise, familiarizing the Welsh and ourselves to the presence of enormous buffalo-like figures with abundant dark curly hair and wide, exceedingly amiable faces.

The connection between regionalism and sport is even more apparent when one considers the topography of bull-fighting, confined primarily to an area stretching from the Pyrenees to as far east as Nîmes and Orange. Unlike most other sports, bull-fighting has always been closely identified with parties and groups belonging to the extreme Right, and with such Fascist writers as Brasillach and Montherlant, and other affete intellectuals who have made a double cult of cruelty and hispanophilia. It is equally significant — and extremely creditable to that active and upright element in French society — that all the efforts undertaken to prohibit this disgusting sport have been initiated by Southern Protestants and Protestant organizations, including the Protestant-dominated Société Protectrice des Animaux. Holt gives the southern Protestants due credit in this respect. Predictably, at the time of the Affaire, the *corrida* was violently *anti-foreigner*. More recently, in its anxiety to maintain local popularity in places like Sète and Béziers, it has received enthusiastic

support, under the disguise of a "democratic" form of leisure and mass enjoyment, from local branches of the French Communist Party, never unwilling to play the separatist and regionalist ticket. The author does not disguise the generally poor quality of French *corridos* and the many scandals that have been the result of their mismanagement.

Equally firmly localized, along the Franco-Belgian border, in the suburbs of Roubaix-Tourcoing, is cock-fighting, now apparently on the decline, the "sport" failing to appeal to the young, while retaining the fidelity of the elderly. At its height, before 1914, the game even ran to having its own specialized newspaper, *le Coquelicot*, written largely in the Franco-Flemish patois of Tourcoing, closer perhaps to Flemish, and indicating a social appeal to the ambivalent population, mostly drawn from West Flanders, and forming *les frontalières*. The paper used even to carry marriage advertisements, and the enthusiasts of this peculiar sport apparently often intermarried, thus perpetuating and reinforcing the inbred nature of a semi-clandestine type of mass spectator participation that has never been legalized. There seems to have been some connection between cock-fighting and tobacco smuggling, though this is a social aspect of north-eastern leisure that is not discussed by the author.

It is curious that a sport so cruel should also have been so closely associated with the still vibrant enthusiasm, among the mill-workers of the Three Towns (Lille, Roubaix, Tourcoing) and the working people of Mons and Charleroi, for pigeon-fancying and pigeon-racing. This is a truly Franco-Belgian form of leisure (the same could be claimed for *le cyclisme*), miners both sides of the border, in the Anzin basin, in the Borinage, and in the Lens area, having always been drawn to this form of summer evening or weekend activity, perhaps as a contrast to their own dark, underground working existence. In the Nord, *la colombeophilie* has also been traditionally associated with Resistance. In 1914 and again in 1940, one of the earliest measures adopted by the German Occupying authorities was to order, under the threat of very severe penalties, the handing in of all these racing birds. During the First World War, such birds as were not handed in were often employed to carry messages to British headquarters in Belgium, as well as to bring back French news sheets into the Occupied zone.

The author rightly concentrates most attention on what could certainly be described as the national sport of France: *le cyclisme*. This could take the form of the gruelling long-distance races, the earliest to be adopted: the dreadful Paris-Roubaix ("l'enfer du Nord"), a half over cobbles, the equally dreadful Paris-Brussels, the Paris-Bordeaux, the Paris-Brest, and the one-time Paris-Tours. But the most prestigious form of *cyclisme* is the highly commercialized Tour de France, a visible assertion both of the territorial unity and of the variety of "l'Hexagone" (even though it may take in sizeable chunks of Belgium, West Flanders, or Northern Italy). One of the purposes of the Tour is to give a fleeting sense of national importance to small market-towns well off the main high-roads and awarded the valuable privileges of being at the start or at the finish of one of the daily *étapes*. The "Géants de la Route", the heroes of the greatest cycle race in existence, tend to be country boys, drawn from every region of France, their swift and immensely colourful passage eagerly awaited in the home provinces and through their native villages. Holt likens the Tour to a popular equivalent of the famous school story about the two Asiatian boys who set off to discover France on foot; and it is certainly significant that the longest Tour ever planned

An Old Score

Capless, conscious of that cold patch on my head
where my father's genes have made me almost bald
I walk along the street where he dropped dead,
my hair cut his length now, although I'm called
poet, in my passport.

When it touched my ears
he dubbed me *Paganini* and it hurt:
I did then, and do now, choke back my tears —
"I'm like that, you ought to wear a shirt!"

If I'd got a violin for every day
he'd said *we're the fiddler at my flowing hair!*
I'd have a whole string orchestra to play
romantic background as once more I'm there
where we went for forced fortightly clip
now under new, less shimmering, ownership,
and in the end it's that that makes me cry —
JOE'S SALOON's become CURL UP & DYE!

Tony Harrison

Safe

By Hol

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The Lone
211pp. Co.
0 01 2214

"The idea
is as rem
soil." The
middle-cl
ically pig

and completed was that of 1919, in
hymn to victory, after four years' interruption.

As in the national press and, even
more, in local papers, the public
eagerly studies each successive *Étape*,
it acquires a sense of topography that
tends to give new life to the great
coloured maps of the French
Departments that decorate village
schoolrooms. In short, the Tour is a
popular twentieth-century version of
Expilly, as it flashes down mountain-
passes, creeps up the steep slopes of
the Mont Ventoux, or spreads
across the flat, sandy Landes. It is as
much a poem to the French Republic
as the celebrated march of the *fédérés*
from Marseille to Paris through the
bright spring and the steaming
summer of 1792.

No other form of sport contains
such a clear assertion of national
identity, though for the rider it is a
geography lesson of quite killing -
sometimes literally killing - effort
and offering little visual satisfaction.
Bent face to the ground over the
handle-bars, the rider is unlikely to
appreciate the beauty of the green
Pyrenees, the majesty of the Alps,
the long straight roads of the Beauce
or the poplar-lined *parc* of the Nord.
Finally, the Tour serves as quite the
most retentive calendar of popular
memory: there are Bobet years and
Poulidor years, and each winner of
the *maillot jaune* is likely to mark his
given year or years far more firmly
than the coming and going of gov-
ernments.

Finally, there used to be such
highly commercialized events as Les
Six Jours de Paris. This series of
timed sprints on a circular indoor
track was one of the main fea-
tures of the old Velodrome d'Hiver
and one of the great social occasions
of the inter-war years, mingling the
extremes of classes in an agreeable
frisson, introducing a fur-coated
Tout-Paris to the exciting, yet alarm-
ing families of north-east Paris and
its industrial suburbs.

French cycle-racing illustrates an
evolution similar to that of associa-
tion and rugby football. In the 1870s,
cycles still being articles of luxury,
cycling remained an elitist enjoyment
indulged in by upper-middle-class
youth of both sexes. Apart from the
acquisition of the machine itself, it
required the purchase of elaborate
clothing, from head to foot (the cati-

logues of the great department stores
stressed the importance of obtaining
a complete outfit). But with the ad-
vent of the mass-produced machine,
by 1900 *le cyclisme* was already well
established as the sport of the com-
mon people. By 1914, there were 3½
million bicycles in France, a social
revolution that released the peasant
boy and peasant girl from the isolation
of rural life, introducing them to
urban values and enjoyments, news
of which was reaching them, at much
the same time, through the cata-
logues of *la Samaritaine* or *la Belle
Jardinière*.

It was not just a matter of the
prestige to be derived from success
in racing. On the eve of the First
World War, the bicycle had become
one of the most powerful instru-
ments of national identity. By 1926,
there were about 7 million bicycles
in France and by 1938, 9 million, a
level that has remained fairly stable
ever since. Two years earlier, in the
summer of the Front Populaire and
as a result of the introduction of the
congés payés, working-class couples
from Saint-Denis la Chapelle, Pan-
tin, Aubervilliers and Montreuil
could be seen setting out on their
kingfisher tandems for a distant Côte
d'Azur. Already in the 1920s, as he
recalls in his memoirs, Léageat had
cycled from Paris to Décazeville in
order to meet the family of his fan-
tasy. During the Occupation, the
bicycle became an instrument of sur-
vival, used by the townsman to scour
le plat pays in search of eggs, butter
and potatoes. It is significant that, in
Paris, cycle shops are thick on the
ground in the XXème, the XVème, the
XIXème, and the XIIème, and that the
capital of the bicycle is Saint-
Etienne.

The history of sport is also that of
popular heroes, slightly larger than
life, of working-class or peasant boys
who, thanks to their skill, their pro-
fession, their persistence and their cour-
age, managed to escape from the
trough of poverty and isolation, to
see their names in lights. So much of
popular identification with, let us
say, *les Gitanes de la Route* is due
to the endearment and ancient appeal
of the theme of the poor boy who made
it to the top. Hence Georges Car-
pentier, *"le gosse lensois"*, the son of
a miner, hence Terront, born in
Saint-Ouen, the son of a mechanic,
who eventually made good, married
well, his best man a cycling-mad
Russian aristocrat.

But many more, having reached
the top, toppled down the other
side. Pour Jacquelin, the baker's boy
from Mémillemont, carried shoulder
high after winning the Grand Prix de
Paris in 1900, "became a sad, im-
poverished drifter picking up occa-
sional work unloading coal barges
and dreaming of a come-back. In
1929 he was found dead after sleep-
ing rough on the banks of the Seine
in icy weather." Then there is the

He takes us also through some
unexpected by-ways of Paris popular
history. I can recall the mass cross-
country outings, organized by *l'Auro*
and *Paris-Saint*, along the Cours de
Vincennes in the 1930s; but I did not
know that young clerks once used
the Carrousel and the Buttes-
Chaumont as running tracks. One
thing I do miss is the annual waters
race down from the Butte, each par-
ticipant wearing a long white apron



extraordinary Senegalese, "Battling
Siki", a boxer who "on one occasion
... borrowed three lion cubs and
with a friend took them to a café,
where he proceeded to order five
Pernods, one for each of the lions
and one each for himself and his
companion". Later he was murdered
in New York. Earlier we hear of the
splendid Léotard, an acrobat dressed
in a pink body-stocking (un *léopard*)
who "spent most of his money on
female admirers, of whom he had a
famous number, and died of the
pox in Madrid in 1870".

Less tragic is the story of Holt
told by the cyclist Brambilla: "After
his third Tour in 1947, friends visit-
ing his house unannounced found
him digging a large hole at the bot-
tom of the garden in which to bury
the racing bicycle he no longer cov-
ered himself good enough to ride".
A suitable commentary on the val-
ue, the simplicity and the friendliness
of so many of these sportsmen, who,
at the expense of tremendous efforts,
sometimes managed to climb to an
unsteady pinnacle of fame. Sport is
as much the history of individuals,
often highly eccentric ones, as of
mass participation and popular lea-
sure, and Holt's sympathy for indi-
viduals gives added warmth to a
book which is also a brilliant and
original social study.

and carrying a tray bearing a bottle
and half-a-dozen glasses.

In his concluding chapter, Holt
once more emphasizes the close con-
nection between French sport, the
French café, and various forms of
masculine groupings. Both gymnastics
and *la chasse* could be seen as
attempts to escape, for a Sunday, from
the confines of domesticity and fam-
ily, from wife or fiancée. In this re-
spect the history of sports clubs, so
often awarded the adjective *amical*
(and, as the author says, this is a *key*
word, to be taken literally, in the
sense of masculine friendship) fol-
lows a course roughly parallel to that
of local *sociétés savantes*. Each has
tended to become a gerontocracy,
gradually failing to attract a younger
membership, with office-holders re-
taining their posts for thirty or forty
years. *La Chasse* has certainly man-
aged to retain - even to extend - its
masculine appeal. But the small local
club seems to have entered on a long
and no doubt final decline, in the
same way that local café life has
shrivelled, as the card-playing of the
Café du Commerce die off. The re-
sult is a great loss to the local savour
and variety of French provincial life.
How often, one wonders, nowadays
would a group of men gather
together for an evening jollity, cul-

minating in the singing of "la poupe
à merde"?

A suitable epilogue to this ex-
cellent, enjoyable, and, on the whole,
happy book would be a visit to the
basement floor of the Bazar de
l'Hôtel-de-Ville, in east-central Paris,
with its own access to the metro, and
which offers to the visitor perhaps
the most dramatic visible source for
the history of French sport at the
present day. There could be no more
eloquent commentary both on the
democratization of *la chasse* and on
studied masculinity than the bat-
tions of life-sized and very alarming
brown-clothed *chasseurs*, zipped up,
deep-pocketed, archi-protected from
wind and rain, weighed down with
deep pouches, pious enough to con-
tain a score of rabbits and hares
and squadrons of small birds. Clearly
part of the attraction, and one
sedulously cultivated by the curating
BHV - is the sheer joy of dressing
up, and not just the several layers of
thick clothes, but also all the attach-
ments: baskets to be worn at the hip,
musettes, shooting-sticks, not to men-
tion the formidable weaponry itself,
mostly double-barrelled. The *chaseur*
stands, in the vast shop, against an
artificial green background sug-
gestive of tulip wood and black
moor, artificial pheasants flying
through the air, attached to strings.

His paraphernalia is even more
elaborate and complicated (and ex-
pensive) than that of other figures
lurking in the same covered and
over-heated neighbourhood: the
fisherman, clothed and long-boated
in waterproof green, the *campesin*,
the week-end at the same time as the
Moderator of the Assembly of the
Church of Scotland. ("In the cir-
cumstances I am sure you won't
mind separate rooms".)

At her side, furthermore, she has
her Teddies, Sir Iain Moncreiffe of
that ilk, veteran of many a haggis-
piping, no doubt, even of a dropped
sauce-boat or two or a pair of un-
married "companions" staying for
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There are, in fact, two connected
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should be put together by an Ameri-
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and Lord Chesterfield) is largely an
American product: the great names
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and still, I think, still there was a
twelfth edition in 1968) and Amy
Vanderbilt. More important is the
fact that an etiquette book is needed
by a special type of person, some of
whose sub-species are particularly
well represented in the United
States. The type in question could be
generically called *newcomers*, for
they are people who have not had
the chance to pick up the rules of
social behaviour by use and wont
from the first dawning of conscious-
ness. Some newcomers are geo-
graphical, that is immigrants: others
are economic, the newly rich; others
again chronological, the young.

Debrett's *Etiquette and Modern
Manners* opens with some pretty
fancy quotations: George IV is a
natural choice, but it is a mild sur-
prise to find Cardinal Newman, who
spoke of an inward conversion at the
age of fifteen as "confirming me in
my mistrust of the reality of material
phenomena and making me rest in
the thought of two and two only
absolute and luminously self-evident
beings, myself and my Creator",
hardly the language of a gadabout.
Sensibly modest claims are advanced
for the book, as it turns out. Its
purpose, it is said, is to enable peo-
ple to get on with each other easily,
without friction or embarrassment. A
grim truth is proclaimed at the out-
set, a slightly watered-down version
of Dante's Hell: "a great deal of social
life is not inherently pleasant".
To soften its impact, the first main

Such use of evidence is rare,
however. On the whole, the book pro-
vides a full and living picture not
only of the educational and youth-
movement side of Vichy, but also of
many aspects of life at the time: the
effects of food-shortages, for exam-
ple, or of regional policy. And the
sights into more permanent aspects
of the French character about the
containing all-importance of the be-
culturalist; even in June 1944 Bon-
ville was still delivering new instruc-
tions about the examination, and
that summer all sorts of special
arrangements were made for it to be
taken amidst the chaos caused by the
Allied advance, and by bombing. As
Mr. Halls puts it: "Such an obsession
with examinations at so critical a
junction reveals something of the
strength of French educational
bureaucracy and even of national
character."

Absolutely comme il faut

By Anthony Quinton

ELSIE BURCH DONALD (Editor):
Debrett's *Etiquette and Modern
Manners*
400pp. Debrett's Peering. £8.95.
0 905649 43 5

The name Elsie Burch Donald, ex-
emplifying as it does the familiar
pattern of Cornelia Otis Skinner and
Francis Parkinson Keyes, strongly
suggests that the editor of this guide
to the complexities of social inter-
action is an American. But why not?
What we have here is a work of un-
Anglo-American collaboration like
the invasion of France in 1944. I see
Elsie Burch Donald as the
Eisenhower of the whole enterprise,
not perhaps altogether expert in the
more front-line aspects of the thing,
but an indispensable genial diplomat,
preventing collisions and demar-
cating disputes between her gifted
team of collaborators, jealously un-
willing to hand over to their col-
leagues such items as the tipping of
ghillies or the arrangement of cut-
lery.

At her side, furthermore, she has
her Teddies, Sir Iain Moncreiffe of
that ilk, veteran of many a haggis-
piping, no doubt, even of a dropped
sauce-boat or two or a pair of un-
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ple to get on with each other easily,
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grim truth is proclaimed at the out-
set, a slightly watered-down version
of Dante's Hell: "a great deal of social
life is not inherently pleasant".
To soften its impact, the first main

topic broached is "births and the
ceremonies of childhood" of which it
is observed "the birth of a child is
almost always a happy occasion".
Any temptation to gush is kept at
bay with that sensible "almost".
quieting the thought of twelve-year-
old mothers, deformed or loopy infants,
and so on. The social concomitants of
birth are gone into in thorough detail.
Unmarried parents are told how to
announce the happy birth. Jewish
circumcision is dealt with rather
sketchily. The permission "guests may
be invited to attend" hardly answers
the question: "do we have to have our
brother-in-law's partner?"

Engagements, marriages, divorces
and funerals naturally follow, taking
up, with birth, the first quarter of the
book. There is almost as much legal
advice as social: don't forget the death
certificate. For those still hung up on
the prayer book's table of kindred and
affinity, there is the news that twen-
tieth-century legislation has licensed
the embraces not only of a deceased
wife's sister but of a deceased wife's
mother's sister. A question that must
be asked is whether many a head in
the waiting-room is settled. If you
want your daughter's picture to appear
in *Country Life* you just send it along
(and presumably hope that her appear-
ance and your address will carry the
day). On the topic of announcing to
interested parties the breaking of an
engagement the book has a rare re-
course to italics: *no explanation is
necessary*.

In their final summary on wed-
dings the compilers rationally ob-
serve, "Weddings do not run them-
selves; the success of such an occa-
sion is in exact proportion to the
amount of thought and hard work
that goes into its planning". Guests,
they rightly say, should not have "to
hang about in long queues". In all
but the most fearful weather, I have
found, the miseries of the queue are
greatly alleviated if one is given a
substantial drink as soon as one joins
it. A warning is given against choc-
olate cake on grounds of stickiness,
not social impropriety. No guidance
is offered on the choice of ushers. I
thought that, where available, they
were rejected swains of the bride. A
display of the presents is discouraged
as vulgar and risky. Still worrying
about the queue, a revival of what is
said to have been the usual practice
before the war is recommended:
guests are announced to the bride's
mother on her own and then trundle
in to where the bride and groom are.
"It is essential to keep the speeches
as short as possible" and speakers
"must be chosen with care". You
bet. That vital truth could, with
advantage, have been printed in red,
like the remarks of the Supreme
Being in the Scofield Bible favoured
by fundamentalists in the southern
United States.

Coming on to divorce, the book
neither deplores nor encourages a
practice I have met with only once,
that of sending friends a stiff card
with a copperplate announcement of
the forthcoming separation. It would
save all those letters people write
which begin "Eunice and I have de-
cided that we must go our separate
ways . . . We hope that this will not
mean your being lost to either of
us . . . Here, as elsewhere, the com-
pilers are very frugal about provid-
ing specimen letters, although they
quote a marvellous one from Henry

Certain hazards of the table are
shied away from. "Corn on the cob
is best reserved for family occa-
sions". There is a very careful and
penetrating discussion of how to get
pass on to one's fork with a page of
confidence-undermining pictures de-
voted to the matter.

The onward movement of fashion
has already rendered obsolete the
assertion that "the cocktail party
is not often served nowadays", but not
the accompanying suggestion that
one should not use the phrase "cock-
tail party" in an orally administered
invitation. The problem of children's
parties is taken seriously, but some
of their features are passed over in
silence. With young children the tea
that the host parents hope will keep
the guests busy for quite a time
whistles by in dead silence, with
some platefuls of allegedly correct
food being emptied in an instant,
others treated as if radioactive. But
on the whole the treatment of chil-
dren is very sound. There is an ex-
cellent page or two on how to treat
the children of a house you are
staying at, also the admirable advice
that if children are not specified on a
wedding invitation do not bring them.

Has there been some intervention
from the top and is Elsie Burch

James to Leslie Stephen on the
death of Stephen's first wife. Such
things give life and colour to a work
of this sort.

A major worry expressed in con-
nection with funerals is the tasteless-
ness of crematoria, to which, it
appears, 67 per cent of us now go on
death. As a palliative they suggest a
memorial service in a really glorious
church.

The next large chunk of the book
is taken up with entertaining, with
how to behave at table, how to or-
ganize parties, how to invite and
thank, how to have or be a guest in
the house. Dinner parties should not
begin before eight. Objection is
made to, and remedies proposed for,
very frequent feature of modern
life: "the prolonged and continual
absence of the hostess" until she
finally emerges with the first course
in a slightly flushed and shiny state.
There is a wildly funny picture on
page 114 of four circles, each slightly
smaller than the one to its left, and
with nothing present to serve as a
measuring rod. The caption reads:
"2a. Shown above: a dinner plate,
pudding plate, intermediate size for
cheese/salad, and butter plate". It is
very much in the style of Beach-
comber's statistical diagrams of the
incidence of dandruff amongst kipper-
darkeners, where there was sometimes
a short squat polygon called "Fatty".

Mention of pudding brings into
focus the fact that this book is not
for complete beginners. Throughout
"dessert" is raw fruit, "pudding"
prepared dish you eat before the
cheese (or after it, if a bit French-
ified), while a "sweet" is a wrapped
object from a glass jar. An occasion-
ally, almost muttered, warning is
pushed out through clenched teeth
as we approach the frontiers of barba-
rity: on wine, "in no circumstances
should glasses contain lumps of ice"
and "wine is always sipped". Not
that the book always takes its own
advice: "The hounds are always re-
ferred to as *hounds*, not the hounds,
or worse, dogs".

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that if children are not specified on a
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Has there been some intervention
from the top and is Elsie Burch

Donald drawing on American experi-
ence in her account of what a man
should do in the way of hopping out
and opening doors for a female pas-
senger in his car? Or again when we
are told that at the beginning of a
letter "My dear" is considered some-
what patronizing in the U.S.? Given
the extraordinary unwillingness
of most people here to answer
invitations, there is an American ex-
pedient that might be useful, that of
putting "Regrets only" and a tele-
phone number in place of the usual
R.S.V.P.

Quite a lot of the book is devoted
to precise formal technicalities where
we are nearly all newcomers, in deal-
ings with royalty, for example. A
great tabulated array of information
about correct forms of address goes
into the thing most impressively, for
envelopes, introductions, letter open-
ings and place cards. The entry for
children of Irish chieftains puts one
in mind of Irish snikes: "Children of
Irish chieftains have no special titles
or designations". Only one thing de-
feats the compilers completely: what
to put on the place card of the Pope.

There are chapters on sport (at
Lords confine your comments to
"well played, Sir" when near the
pavilion), on how to treat servants
(the ones you rent and the ones you
find in a few grand places), on hos-
pital visits (take robust plants that
won't wilt discouragingly), on social
intercourse with Moslems ("The
surest way to avoid causing offence
is to pretend women don't exist at
all"). This last item comes in a chap-
ter on business manners which is
generally reasonable but, when on
the subject of the telephone, fails to
attack that disgusting practice of get-
ting your secretary to ring up people
with the words "Mr So-and-so would
like to speak to you", inviting the

The impression the book gives of
our society is of general deliquescence,
in which a few islands of cere-
mony are still unrotted: birth, mar-
riage, death and the royal family.
What it does lack is the qualities of
vigilant imagination which led
Edmund Wilson to compare Emily
Post's *Etiquette* to a Proustian novel.
In that amazing work there are glo-
rious social stereotypes with
Bunyanesque names: the Worldlys,
the Gildings (of Golden Hall), Jim
Smartlington, Mrs Topfoly, Mr and
Mrs Spendesty Western, Mrs Old-
name, the Upstairs, Mrs Onecore,
all expressing their defining charac-
teristics in an uninhibited fashion. In
Debrett's *Etiquette* this sort of con-
creteness is to be found only in the
specimen announcements, as of "The
marriage which 'took place' on
Saturday at Holy Trinity Church at
Amberley, between Mr Robert
Smith, younger son of the late Major
R. E. Smith and of Mrs R. E. Smith
of 30 Lennox Road, London SW1,
and Miss Hazel Jones of the Cot-
tage, Amberley". I fear that Hazel
will turn out to be a woman with a
past and that Robert has been bad.

Siegfried Lenz
THE HERITAGE

"Siegfried Lenz's novel is a colossal achievement. It contains
a seemingly endless parade of striking images and characters
who seem larger than life precisely because they are so
beautifully rooted in life . . . a genuinely fabulous tale . . . it
should be read by anyone who takes pleasure in entering a
world so beautifully and completely realised that, for all its
apparent alienness, it rapidly becomes our own."
Salman Rushdie, *New York Times*

"... deserves comparison with *Dr. Faustus* and *The Tin Drum*
as a comprehensive analysis of Germany's cultural disinte-
gration."
S. N. Plaipe, *Times Literary Supplement* £8.98

Margaret Forster
MARITAL RITES

"A book that leaves one as heady and delighted as a glass of
good champagne."
Martyn Goff, *Daily Telegraph*

"Miss Forster's last novel, *Mother Can You Hear Me?*, was a
triumph: her latest, *Marital Rites*, has surpassed even that
achievement . . . impossible to put down."
Angela Huth, *Listener* £6.95

Pat Conroy
THE LORDS OF DISCIPLINE

"I have read few novels so vigorous, so free-flowing, and yet
so marvellously disciplined. I can only compare it with a crack
regiment on the march. And yet it is sceptical, irreverent,
compassionate and humane. The only novels I can think of
remotely like it are *Caldor Willingham's End as a Man* and
Robert Mudd's *Young Törless*."
John Braine, *Sunday Telegraph* £8.95

Frances Oliver
XARGOS

"A splendid short novel about the perils of ignorance, and
written with a nice wit, a sharp ear for good dialogue, and
some fine, evocative descriptions of Turkey."
Nina Bayden, *Daily Telegraph*

"Xargos is an unusual and exciting novel written in an elegant
and stylish prose."
Pleasant Paul Read, *New Standard* £8.95

Secker &
Warburg

Regenerating the roots

By Richard Griffiths

W. D. HALLS:
The Youth of Vichy France
492pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford
University Press. £20.
0 19 82257 6

"Education physique absente, éducation
morale quasi nulle, éducation
nationale oubliée - à moins qu'elle
ne soit donnée à rebours, telle est
la situation." These views, ascribed to
Pétain and Weygand by L'Ami du
peuple in 1936, go some way towards
explaining the importance given to
Education, and to Youth, in the initial
policies of the Vichy Govern-
ment. For the Right, but above all
for the simplistic "Silent Minority" to
which so many of the prominent fig-
ures of the new régime belonged,
the French educational system had
been in large part to blame for the
decline in national morale which was
a major factor in the defeat of 1940.
The society of the inter-war period,
devoted to enjoyment rather than to
duty, had become engulfed by a
"wave of materialism". The gratifica-
tion of the individual had become
more important than service to the
community. "The only way to re-
generate society was to start at the
roots: with a new policy for youth."

The bare bones of that policy, and
its attempted realization, have been
examined before - on the one hand,
the rôle of the Ministry of Educa-
tion, on the other, the various youth
movements, and the "Schools of
Cadres". But even now, the lack of
official documentation has been an

almost insuperable hindrance. The
official archives of the Vichy régime
remain, in principle, closed to re-
searchers. Scholars have, of course,
been able to use the publicly printed
word, and also any German docu-
mentation available; and on this
basis a number of interesting studies,
mainly in article form, have been
produced. The "Chantiers de la
Jeunesse" have, for example, re-
ceived some useful attention; and, in
the field of educational policy, an
(unpublished) Oxford thesis, pro-
duced in 1976 by J. A. D. Long,
entitled *The French Right and
Education: the Theory and Practice
of Vichy Education Policy, 1940-
1944*, reached a number of striking
conclusions, mainly on the basis of
published directives and reports. All
the work done on this subject so far
has, however, been bound to remain
generalized and in some respects un-
satisfactory. The inaccessible docu-
ments, by the mere fact of their
existence, have hung over research-
ers with the possibility that their
conclusions might at the worst be
invalid, and at the least be lacking in
nuance and qualifications.

W. D. Halls has, almost miracu-
lously, broken this impasse. Having
obtained special permission to con-
sult the relevant documents in the
Archives Nationales, and in the Ar-
chives Départementales du Nord, he
has closely examined an enormous
mass of new material. This includes
letters, reports, minutes, etc., not
only from the papers of the Minister
of Education, but also of other gov-
ernment departments (and of the
German authorities); it includes, as
well as a great many documents re-
lating specifically to the "Chantiers
de la Jeunesse", the archives of Pétain's
own "cabinet", and especially
those of the Marshal's personal con-
fident, Bernard Ménétrier. Mr Halls's
examination of this documentation
has been meticulous, and has been
supplemented by recourse to a wide
variety of provincial archives. By the
sheer amount of new, detailed in-
formation which it provides, his
book will be indispensable to histo-
rians of the period.

History is untidy; there is a danger
in trying to create coherent patterns
where they do not exist. By avoiding
any such imposition, and to a great
extent letting the contents of the
documents speak for themselves,
Halls is largely successful in con-
veying the essential incoherence of
much of the Vichy period. The reg-
ime's continual shifts and changes of
policy, for example, "As in other
domains of national life, in education
and youth matters there was not one
policy, but several, evolving over
time. This is because, as compared
with the era of the Third Republic,
the spectrum of policies that the
Vichy interlude refracted was almost
as broad . . . The colour gradations
were as subtle as the doctrines they
represented."

Added to this, political tendencies
among the legislators did not always
accurately reflect their educational
theories. Vichy's educational poli-
cies, so apparently coherent in their
general principles, became lost in a
 welter of contradictory detail.
Moreover, much of the personnel,
both teachers and civil servants, re-
mained the same as under the Third
Republic. No matter how funda-<

Images of malediction

By S. S. Prawer

RUTH MELLINKOFF:
The Mark of Cain
151pp plus 22 black-and-white plates. £7.75.
University of California Press. 27.75.
0 520 03969 6

Nothing could be more appropriate than the appearance of a study of Cain in a series called "Quantum Books". A quantum, I take it, is a small unit emitting energy; and the story of Cain and Abel, as narrated in Genesis, fits that description admirably. As brief and laconic as anything in the Old Testament, the tale has a symbolic radiance wholly out of proportion to the time it takes to read or to tell, and it has given rise to question after question with which men and women for whom the Bible is a religious or cultural sacrament have had to wrestle through the ages. Why did God accept Abel's offering but reject Cain's? Why was Cain afraid of being killed by men if only his own parents were left alive in the world? Whom did he marry, who was there to hear him Enoch? Why and how, if he was doomed to be a restless wanderer, did he found a city? Was the "land of Nod" a real locality or was it, as its name suggests to those who know Hebrew, a symbolic Place of Wandering? Why is so much space given to Cain's conversation with God and so little, proportionately, to coherent narrative of events? Does Lamech's riddling poem refer, in some way, to Cain's death? Was the mark of Cain a sign of special protection or a sign of infamy? What, indeed, was the mark of Cain?

The short book under review addresses itself to the varied answers given, by writers and artists, to this last question; but it soon becomes apparent that these involve an engagement with some, at least, of the other problems raised by the fourth chapter of Genesis. The author begins by considering the Vulgate text of Genesis 4: and shows the words "Ponitque Dominus Cain signum" to be capable of at least two different renderings: (a) The Lord placed a sign on Cain. (b) The Lord made Cain (into) a sign. The Hebrew text, which Dr Mellinkoff does not quote, could be translated as (c) "The Lord set a sign for Cain". This suggests an interpretation that gained wide currency in Britain with the help of the Victorian parson's standby, Dr William Smith's *Concise Dictionary of the Bible*, where we read:

"The mark set upon Cain" probably means that Jehovah gave a sign to Cain, very much as signs were afterwards given to Noah (Gen. ix. 13), Moses (Ex. iii. 2, 12), Elijah (1 K. xix. 11) and Hezekiah (Is. xxxviii. 7, 8). This interpretation, it would appear, does not commend itself to Dr Mellinkoff any more than it did to the translators of the New English Bible. She quotes Ambrose's "signum super eum ponitur" and comments that these phrases make it "clearly certain" that Ambrose "understood the mark to have been placed on the person of Cain". Clearly certain? Could not Ambrose's words mean that the Lord placed a sign above Cain, as he did in the case of Noah? One of the rabbinic interpretations Dr Mellinkoff herself quotes points in this direction: "R. Judah said: he caused the orb of the sun to shine on his account."

Let us follow this quotation from the Midrash Rabbah a little further; it is uniquely well suited to introducing some of the other interpretations which Christian, as well as Jewish exegetes have given to the mark of Cain.

R. Judah said: He caused the orb of the sun to shine on his account. Said R. Nehemiah to him: For that which he would cause the orb of the sun to shine! Rather he caused leprosy to break out on him; ... Rab said: He gave him a dog. Abba Jose said: He made a horn grow out of him. Rab said: He made him an example to murderers. R. Hanin said: He

made him an example to penitents. R. Levi said in the name of R. Simon b. Lakish: He suspended judgement until the flood came and swept him away. If Rabbi Judah's opinion suggests interpretation (c), Rabbi Hanina's represents (b) and Rabbi Nehemiah's (a). We can go further, however, and see the same passage as evidence for other classifications suggested by Dr Mellinkoff. She rightly contrasts those who considered Cain's repentance sincere (and who therefore thought of the mark as pre-eminently a boon and a sign of protection) with those who did not (and who therefore saw the mark as a token of rejection and punishment). She also adduces a good deal of evidence to show how some interpreters depicted the mark as an *event*, others as a *bodyguard* (God gives Cain a dog), yet others as an *eruption* or *excrecence*. No one can be left in any doubt, however, after perusing all the evidence here assembled, that most of those who gave this subject any thought saw Cain as in some way physically marked. The central chapters of the book are therefore given over to an analysis and classification under three headings: a mark on Cain's body; a movement of Cain's body; and a blemish associated with Cain's body.

We learn to see Cain's mysterious, unspecified mark as leprosy, as brand of shame, as body-hair and/or horns, as beardlessness, as wens or warts, as black colour - but also as a letter of the Shem, God's holy name. We see it on forehead, cheek and arm, and hear it classified as an apotropaic device, as a sign of opprobrium, or as both of these together. It is described, in Dr Mellinkoff's instructive pages, as a growling or trembling, or as a continual shaking of the head like that characteristic of Parkinson's disease; also, as a "mark" as Cain himself, his whole doomed person, whose wandering is a sign of God's irresistible will and moral judgement.

In tracing all these varied interpretations through rabbinic commentaries, patristic literature, mystery plays, a few selected post-medieval writings, and pictorial depictions of Cain in the Bodleian Library to a woodcut by Gerhard Marcks in a Los Angeles art gallery, Dr Mellinkoff discovers some surprising developments and even more surprising correspondences. There is the confluence, for instance, of the notion that Cain's mark was a horn (or horns) with the tale of a death at the hand of Lamech, illustrated in some beautiful and unfamiliar medieval works of art. "How amazing," the author exclaims at one point, "to see this ancient midrashic theme suddenly emerge in a thirteenth-century English psalter. Is this an isolated and lonely tip of what might have been a hidden mass of accumulated traditional lore? I would attribute this unique portrayal to the strangely wonderful, conservative ability of folklore to preserve and transmit ideas of former times." Among the developments chronicled, the most heretical and hateful are the gradual identification, in the writings of the Church Fathers, of Cain with the Jewish people, matched by a popular conflation of Cain and the Wandering Jew; the tradition that Cain was black, that blackness was the mark of Cain, which can be pursued from medieval texts and pictures into the writings of Joseph Smith and his Mormon disciples and successors; and the use of the figure of Cain for social satire, Romantic self-projection, and Nietzschean revaluation.

Dr Mellinkoff is happiest when summarizing early Jewish and Christian doctrines and illustrating them with a wide variety of early plays, paintings and sculptures. She suggests links between the horns of Cain and those of Moses (to which she has devoted an earlier monograph) and connects legends about Cain's "bestial" aspect after the murder with his "accidental" death at the hands of his blind descendant Lamech. An important point is made

here, however, when we are told that after Lamech's son had unwittingly caused his father to slay Cain with an arrow, Lamech kills the youth "in anger or sorrow or frustration". We should surely have been reminded, here, that several Jewish versions of this legend depict both killings as accidental and unpremeditated, and that this double accident turns poor Lamech into the very archetype of the "shlemihl" whose Biblical ancestry Heine sought to trace in his poem *Jehuda ben Halevy*. And an important connection is missed, too, when Dr Mellinkoff discusses and illustrates the literary and iconographic tradition which sees Cain as a *holy* man. There is surely a confluence here, between Cain and Esau, natural enough when one considers that the story of Jacob and Esau belongs as surely as that of Cain and Abel to the tape of tale which folklorists know as "die dienliche Brüder" or "The Two Hostile Brothers".

As an art-historian specializing in medieval iconography Dr Mellinkoff is clearly less at home in modern literature than in earlier texts and illustrations. She was wrong, I think, not to include Gessner's *The Death of Abel* in her survey - for this once popular work (praised by Byron and Coleridge, who were both fascinated by the figure of Cain) would have yielded a rare and pertinent example of text and picture, done by the same hand, reinforcing and counterpointing one another. Her discussion of Byron's *Cain* suffers, not only from insufficient analysis of its context in the Romantic period, but also from an inexplicable omission. While rightly drawing our attention to the burning mark which the Angel of the Lord sets on Cain's brow towards the end of Act III, the author fails to note what is surely Byron's most original contribution to the iconography of the mark of Cain. The passage in question occurs at the beginning of the same act.

Cain: The earth swims round me: - what is this? - 'tis wet, [Puts his hand to his brow, and then looks at it.] And yet there are no dew! 'Tis blood - my blood - My brother's and my own; and shed by me!



A detail of "God cursing and marking Cain" in an English thirteenth-century psalter. From the book reviewed here.

the archetypal story and the imagery habitually associated with the evil Cain, of whose absence Dr Mellinkoff complains, are clearly presupposed in the reader's mind as well as in Sinclair's. And thirdly - as the title of the chapter just quoted may serve to suggest - allusions to the mark of Cain are only part of a complex typological and prefigurative network in Hesse's novel which may not, surely, be simply disregarded or dismissed without any attempt at examination and assessment.

Dr Mellinkoff's more successful analyses and demonstrations illustrate, once again, how much our world needs a Black counter-aesthetic. We see once more how persistently, in our culture, blackness has suggested the wicked and the ugly; how easily notions of a dark-skinned Cain reinforced discriminatory anti-negro attitudes which even depictions of a wise black Ethiopian adorning the Christ-child could not counteract. And some of the most powerful passages in this short, suggestive, well-illustrated book tell us how the mark of Cain came to be associated with the Jewish people as a whole - a sorry history which Dr Mellinkoff traces from Ambrose and Augustine to Matthew Gregory Lewis and from there to the horrors of more recent times. In association with the Jews the mark could be depicted as the indelible cross that can be clearly distinguished on the Wandering Jew in Dore's coloured woodcut; it could be the letter "J", branded on to the foreheads of Judaizing heretics in the Middle Ages; it could be seen, or imagined, as a circumcised; it could be a discriminatory badge which Jews were forced to sew on to their clothes. Dr Mellinkoff rightly reminds us, in this connection, of the Yellow Star, and the tattooed on to prisoners' arms. But as I looked through Dr Mellinkoff's imaginatively chosen illustrations another image, another icon, kept obtruding itself on to my memory. Not a painting, this time, or a sculpture, but a photograph: one of those pictorial records with which the deviators of Europe unaccountably perpetuated the memory of their misdeeds. It shows uniformed tortur-

ers with three East European Jews on to whose foreheads they have secured, not a cross, this time, but a Star of David. Professor Elie Wiesel, who has gone through the hell of the concentration-camps and come back, like Lazarus, to tell his tale, has recently felt moved to retell the story of Cain and Abel in the light of his dark experiences. He describes it as a threefold confrontation: between man and God, at once present and hidden; between man and his brother, at once rivals and associates; and ultimately between man and himself, oscillating between good and evil, malediction and grace - "timeless forces acting one against the other, one inside the other".

Who confronts whom, then, in that terrible photograph? Who is Cain, the executioner, and who is Abel, his victim? Which of the two wears the mark on his brow? Who has willed the mark to appear there? Whom does it shame, and whom does it exalt? What has become of the ethical teaching in which the author of the fourth chapter of Genesis was clearly so much more interested than in the mere events of his tale? Where is the third partner in this confrontation? Perhaps, one day, Dr Mellinkoff will ponder Professor Wiesel's modern Midrash on Cain in *Messengers of God* and will incorporate her findings in a new edition of *The Mark of Cain*. Even now her book, despite its imperfections, radiates enough energy for any quantum.

Volume XVII of the Yale Oriental Series of Babylonian Texts is *Texts From the Time of Nebuchadnezzar* by David B. Weisberg (Oxpp, 154 plates, Yale University Press, £24.50, 0 300 02338 3). The volume presents eighty-four texts from the Yale Babylonian Collection which were collected and copied by the late Professor R. P. Dougherty with additional texts to form a corpus of 369 legal and administrative documents written between 605 and 581 BC. Professor Dougherty's original cuneiform copies are given with the collected and collated. The texts are reproduced and descriptive catalogue, indexes of names and places and a concordance of museum numbers are also provided.

The gravities of grown-upness

By P. N. Furbank

LIONEL TRILLING:
Of This Time, Of That Place
And Other Stories
110pp. Oxford University Press.
£8.95.
0 19 212217 7

Lionel Trilling's fictional output was, so far as I know, a very small one: one published novel and a small handful of stories, from which Diana Trilling has now selected just five. We need not therefore conclude that he was not "really" a novelist. A couple of his stories, "The Other Margaret" and "Of This Time, Of That Place", seem to me remarkably fine and subtle, and an arduous and entertaining stock notion of the critic in Trilling stifling the creator. For criticism is the whole theme of his stories. They deal in cases of conscience and critical dilemmas, dilemmas involving the rival claims of good enlightened causes; and the life of their protagonists - typically, intellectuals - is a continual process of self-criticism. Their strength is exactly the strength of his literary criticism, and the excellence of the one heightens our sense of the excellence of the other.

A different doubt is whether these stories are too literary; and I suppose the answer is "occasionally so". It gives us just the slightest twinge of discontent that "The Other Margaret" depends on an unstated allusion to Hopkins's "Spring and Fall". The story concerns a girl, Margaret, and the very hurtful step in her growing-up when - brought up as she has been with intensely "enlightened" views on colour and class, etc - she is forced to acknowledge that her parents' black maid ("the other Margaret") is actually a nasty person. Now I don't suppose many readers of *Parish Review*, where the story first appeared, failed to catch allusion to the "other Margaret", and I don't imagine many readers of the *Times Literary Supplement* will fail today. Still, there are other kinds of reader. And, more important, those three Margarets savour faintly of the lecture-hall and the "stimulating" critical essay - an effect injurious to so poignant a story. A small objection. And these stories can also be "literary" in a good and positive sense. Trilling has done something valuable and creative with a Coleridge allusion when he writes, of the incidently-schizophrenic student in "Of This Time, Of That Place", that "The sense of the three-woven circle of the boy's loneliness smote him fiercely".

The three best stories in the present volume are all about growing up; and so, if we reflect, is *The Middle of the Journey*. It was indeed, pretty plainly, Trilling's central preoccupation. It is what links his interest in Matthew Arnold to his interest in E. M. Forster, the two authors to whom he devoted whole books. With Arnold, of course, his affinities were many, and much in what he says in praise of Arnold as critic applies unaltered to himself. For him as for Arnold the law of criticism's nature is "to be a free play of the mind on all subjects which it touches". And it can be said just as truly of his own style as of Arnold's that "It was a style which kept writer and reader at a sufficient distance from each other to allow room between them for the object of their consideration". But more important even than these aspects, for Trilling, was Arnold's commitment to "seeing the object as it really is". It was here that Arnold most commanded his allegiance, and gave it; that Arnold always succeeded in his aim; other literary critics, probably, achieved it more effectively. Eliot did, and Eliot was no doubt right to consider Arnold as limited and as too genteel and incomplete. The point, more, was that he so thoroughly grasped it as a principle - a principle extending far beyond literature.

For Trilling this was the definition, or at least the justification, of liberal

humanism. The famous "conscience" of liberal humanism, in so far as it was not just a sentimental cliché, consists in strenuous cultivation of a sense of fact - a sensitivity to facts of all kinds, including the unexpected, the unpleasant and the conflicting. It is not just a matter of nobly "facing" facts, when pointed out. (And here a remark of E. M. Forster, Trilling's other liberal-humanist mentor, is relevant: "How can I face facts? They're like the walls of a room, all round you.") What was involved was not a posture, however high-minded, but rather a skill and an arduous self-discipline. Nor, if the facts conflict, is it a matter, merely, of saluting complexity and preening oneself on being *oudevant et divers*. If facts conflict, they cannot be facts, not at least in the light in which they are presenting themselves; and by their conflict the honest mind, the liberal-humanist mind, is propelled, dialectically, towards some new vantage-point. This motion of mind, this fluid but directed movement, is what most characterizes Trilling as a critic. No critic has more stunningly, none takes us so far, such a long, logical journey, in a single critical essay - so that we look back at the end wondering how on earth we got there.

If this was the character of Trilling's critical essays, it was also the character of his stories. They are full of motion and precipitancy, which is what makes one feel them to be genuine. They catch the intricacy, but also the sheer restless speed, with which cause and effect take place in the ethical life. The inner life of motives, scruples and self-discoveries is not just in dialogue with the other life of fact and necessity but in ceaseless and moment-by-moment interaction with it. And, moreover, according to laws unlike those of physics: consequences are not proportioned to causes, nor is there any certainty after all what is "inner" and what is "outer". Dream as you may of private freedom, circumstances and your own vanities and unconscious fears are ceaselessly snatching you into public postures. In "Of This Time, Of That Place" the hero, a young lecturer, is in difficulties over a student, whom he suspects may be mad. Something tells him that, at whatever risk to himself, he must not release Tarrant to an "instinctive" self-approvingly, to this "sure instinct"; and at this very same moment he hears himself speaking the fatal words "Is the Dean busy at the moment? I'd like to see him."

To revert to the critic's "sense of fact": this sense can also be called "a recognition of limits". The liberal humanist's accusation against his absolutist and card-carrying adversaries (political and religious) is that they do not recognize limits and in this are being childlike and grown-up. Now, in ordinary human existence the most imperative "recognition of limits" is the acknowledging of death. And here is the strongest link binding Trilling to Forster, whose whole outlook is based on death - on acceptance of the idea of death. ("Death destroys a man, but the idea of death saves him.") So another name again for "seeing the object as it really is" is "growing up" - growing up being considered as the facing of one's own mortality. And what is plain about Trilling is that he was thoroughly relaxed "maturity". It was his style and his "note"; it was what made him tick. Not for him Arnold's melodious complaints at giving up poetry for the grey prose of philanthropy. For Trilling, one feels, it was the cheerful day in his life when he gave up childish things - so that for him Wordsworth's *Immortality Ode* is the most optimistic of poems. A certain grave grown-upness, an especially responsible use of the pronoun "we", is what is central to Trilling's work and gave it its centrality. It perhaps became a bit of a "mantra" towards the end, but not enough to stifle him.

This brings us to *The Middle of the Journey*, the novel he published in 1947 and in which, so extraordinarily, he had depicted an obscure acquaintance, Whitaker Chambers,

aged, I am beginning not to care". The accusation came not as conviction. He did not think it true and this in itself was surprising. This catches exactly Trilling's own pleasurable elation, his exhilaration, at the idea of growing up.

The novel, though, full of brilliant things as it is, strikes me as a failure, for reasons that have to do with maturity versus the childish. Where it fatally goes wrong is in the climactic fifth-act exchange between Laskell and Gifford Maxim, the Whitaker Chambers-like defector from the Party. We are to suppose that Maxim is determined at all costs, for reasons deep in his own guilt-stained political past, to destroy Laskell's new-found maturity and freedom of mind. And we are to suppose, too, that so formidable a man as Maxim or so grandiose is the duel fought between him and Laskell ("Laskell wondered if any man had ever made an attempt on another man such as Maxim was making upon him"). He comes near to succeeding. Now, this is intellectual melodrama or opera; it is self-indulgent and not really worthy of Trilling. After all, as he himself would have held, to choose to be a liberal intellectual must entail a certain renunciation. It means you are not going to renounce the Party or split the Liberal Party over Home Rule or ever cut such a figure under the heavens as do saints or men of action. Nobody is going to care that much about your opinions. This is a loss, of course; but it is childish, surely, to try to redress it in fantasy. There is a great place for intellectual debate in novels and plays, but not, I think - except for purposes of irony - in realistic ones. The careful

Shavian or Chestertonian method, of making the debate the important thing and staging it Lord knows where - under a mid-Victorian gallery or on the dome of St Paul's - seems much wiser.

One further reflection suggests itself. In "The Other Margaret" a socio-political debate is staged, partly in actual dialogue and partly in action and emotional gesture. It concerns the choice to be made between explaining anti-social behaviour (on grounds of social deprivation, oppression, etc) and judging such behaviour; and it is, we feel, conducted truly and plausibly. The reason is that a child takes part in it. A complaint one feels against *The Middle of the Journey* is that, though the Crooms are purportedly intellectuals, there is nothing remotely intellectual about their politics, at least as these are conveyed to us. They recall precisely the little girl in "Of This Time, Of That Place", with her unspoken cry: "In that world one knew where one was, one knew that to say things about Jews was bad and that working men were good. And therefore."

Admittedly, Trilling wrote later that the Communist-orientated intellectuals of the 1940s had, not so much a political life, as a "settled disgust with politics". This, however, does not resolve the problem for his novel. And I see a sort of lesson here. The reason why we and our friends get angry and violent in political argument is, often, not so much the fierceness of our convictions, as rage at feeling ourselves returned to childhood. Fundamental political debates are serious all right, but serious in a way a child can understand.

to some clumsy duplications, but more importantly it sets Horace at the centre of the book, as passive listener and voice of those who have acted in the world the tale reveals to him. What Faulkner discovered as he revamped his book was that Horace, the failed and incestuous romantic, was because of his passivity precisely the wrong centre for the story.

The corruption and degradation of Temple Drake have an atavistic power which Faulkner at first underestimated. We do not need Horace to be shocked on our behalf - his shock is, as it became in revision, a subject, not a natural medium - but we need to know more about Popeye than is here offered. Faulkner depends on Horace's lyrical blindness for interest in a way which distances from, trivialises and dissipates Tennessee Williams. That Faulkner was aware of this division in the work may explain why he repeatedly stresses, in passages later cut, the bleeding occasioned by rape with a corn-cob. When recasting, Faulkner introduces an amoral, roving, cinematic mode of narration which gives us Popeye whole and Horace at a decent remove. The amorality of the narrative voice frees our responses, whereas the "original text's" focus, through Horace is ultimately claustrophobic and redolent of imperfectly communicated private meanings.

Chronological straightening also reduced the symbolic architecture which is so apparent here as, for example, when a parallel is insinuated between Tommy's "Durn them fella's" when Temple is being mobbed by the men at Goodwin's place and Horace's "Damn him" (Gowan) as he thinks of it. This is an interesting collocation of innocents, but it belongs in a different book. Similarly, Popeye's request that the sheriff fix his hair and the latter's ironic reply as he hangs him are here separated by the scene of Temple in the Luxembourg Gardens. This scene, a nub of sexual redundancy rather than pat, for Temple and Popeye are people rather than counters, struggling to escape the text's melancholy self-critique.

Noel Polk is careful to relate *Sanctuary* to its covetals *Flags in the Dust* (excerpted as *Sartoris*, 1929), *The*

Sounds-and-the-Fury (1929), and *As I Lay Dying* (1930). It is a pity that he does not deal with *Requiem for a Nun* (1951), for that gives us rather more specific bearings. The presence of Popeye, who profligates Percy Grimm and Joe Christmas in his derangement, had been the motor of the revised *Sanctuary*, and after the hanging Faulkner had to leave Temple in a prolonged, no longer ectosed stasis: in *Requiem*, he returned to find out what had become of her. He showed Temple prodded to confess the past by the inquisitorial Gavin Stevens, and diminished Popeye to the "psychopath" Vitell.

At once explicit and unrevealing, *Requiem* could not lay the ghost of Temple, the bewitching model for Faulkner's deepest sexual anxieties. As he snipped the galleys of *Sanctuary* and allowed his material to deliver itself from the intrusive, morbid Horace, Temple became herself, but the selfhood she gained was simultaneously transparent and alien, visible but inexplicable. It is worth reflecting that Faulkner cared about her at least as long as he cared for Caddy Compson, and that, as with Caddy, he could never make her disclose her inmost being. The publication of this moving and intriguing early text will draw new attention to a subsidiary cycle in Faulkner's work, one which clearly mattered far more to him than he ever conceded, for this beginning reminds us that, in a curious sense, *Sanctuary* was never to be completed. Not even for money.

William Faulkner's *The Unvanquished* is one of the seven books to receive detailed discussion in Thomas Daniel Young's *The Past in the Present: A Thematic Study of Modern Southern Fiction* (189pp. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 0 8071 0768 9). The others are Allen Tate's *The Fathers*, Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men*, Eudora Welty's *The Optimist's Daughter*, Flannery O'Connor's *The Complete Stories*, Walker Percy's *The Moviegoer* and John Barth's *The End of the Road*. Young explains the origins and demise of the legendary "renaissance" in Southern writing, and defines its literature's unique regional flavour.

Transplanting the art

By Lachlan Mackinnon

WILLIAM FAULKNER:
Sanctuary
The Original Text
Edited by Noel Polk
311pp. Chatto and Windus. £9.95.
0 7011 3900 5

The *Sanctuary* legend is one of Faulkner's most successful fabrications. Written for money, *Sanctuary* was dashed off in three weeks, rejected because of its obscenity and revised at the author's expense when galleys arrived unexpectedly eighteen months later: so the story runs, and at important points the story lies. Noel Polk's edition puts beyond question that the original version of the novel, submitted in May 1929 ("Good God, I can't publish this. We'd both be in jail", Hal Smith, Faulkner's editor replied), represents considerably more than an opportunistic gambler. The revision of *Sanctuary* happened as Faulkner described, but this welcome publication puts that revision in a new light.

This *Sanctuary* tells the familiar story of Temple Drake with few changes of plot: Goodwin is executed rather than lynched, and we are shown letters between Horace and Narcissa, but these are trivial variations. Snopes fans will be glad to know that Virgil and Pozzo were in the book from the start. Apparently the manuscript was attacked with scissors and paste: changes of plot, Goodwin is executed rather than lynched, and we are shown letters between Horace and Narcissa, but these are trivial variations. Snopes fans will be glad to know that Virgil and Pozzo were in the book from the start.

They were required because Faulkner misconceived the form his material called for. In this text, we open with Horace visiting Goodwin in jail, which means that most of the plot is given in flashback - thus, for instance, the description of Ruby watching over Temple in the barn is here narrated by herself. This leads

With eyes open and closed

By Anne Stevenson

MEDBH MCGUCKIAN:

Portrait of Joanna
20pp. Belfast: Ulsterman Publications. 50p.

PHOEBE HESKETH:

The Eighth Day
89pp. Enitharmon Press. £4.95.
(paperback, £3).
0 905289 96 X

HARRY GUEST:

Elegies
20pp. Durham: 11g Press. 80p.
0 903997 57 6

MICHAEL BALDWIN:

Snoak
48pp. Newbury: Phoenix-Springwood.
£3.
09 059 47878

NICK STIMSON:

In Magnet Air
30pp. Newbury: Phoenix-Springwood.
£2.50.
09 059 47924

JOHN WAKEMAN:

Hopeless Loves and Happy Endings
20pp. Dereham: Midsummer Press.

KEITH SAGAR:

The Reef
18pp. Ilkley: The Festival Office. 50p.
0 905125 05 3

LOTTE KRAMER:

Ice-Break
31pp. Peterborough: Annikin Press.
£2.25.
0 906898 02 1

"Don't think", said Wittgenstein, "look!" Wise counsel to poets as well as to philosophers. Nevertheless, (and this was largely Wittgenstein's point), looking implies seeing, or more specifically, the act of seeing as - of seeing shapes and colours as recognizable things which have meanings only in terms of what we know. So the way we look at things comes back, in the end, to the way we think about them. What we think when we look defines what we see.

Thoughts like these are provoked by an extremely interesting, deceptively modest little pamphlet called *Portrait of Joanna* by Medbh McGuckian. Mrs McGuckian is as fine a "looker" as any poet I know. She is as clever (probably as Craig Raine, as perceptive (possibly) as Elizabeth Bishop. Her eye for the minutiae of plant and seed is that of a patient biologist in a high state of emotion. Her sense of the atmosphere of vision is unique, but it is also curiously understated. Where Elizabeth Bishop stands before herself, like her own son, "on a ripple in the river", calling inner panic with a loving consideration of exterior, Medbh McGuckian gives the impression that panic itself is exterior. Reading these poems, one senses that thoughts and perceptions make mysterious connections with a hidden terror in the poet's mind - a terror which insists on being visible.

Take, for example, the first poem, called "Tulips". The poet begins by describing her human shyness in the presence of more independent, somehow superior tulips which, unlike herself, have "Defensive mechanisms to frustrate the rain/ That shakes into the sherry glass/ Of the daffodil." In the second stanza, however, the tulips become fallible, and more human, "like all governesses, easily carried away." They are "ballets of revenge", "an olympic way of earning", necessarily sacrificed to plot, their faces lifted many times to the artillery of light.

Its loveliness a deeper sort Of illness than the womanliness Of tulips with their bee-dark hearts. This, like all the poems in *Portrait of Joanna*, is worth the time spent pondering it. The wealth of exterior explored by Medbh McGuckian's

poems augurs the flowering of a talent which, fortunately, seems too original - too eccentric, even - to be wrongly directed by over-praise or by critical misunderstanding. She sounds, at times, like a contemporary, Irish Emily Dickinson. Flat, coy, confusing when she fails, her successes are dazzling, and her contrived synthesis of looking and thinking, fascinating.

Nevertheless, it is something of a release to turn from the difficult calculations of Medbh McGuckian to the simpler, crafted lyrics of Phoebe Hesketh. The Enitharmon Press has made an elegant volume of her *Selected Poems*, which appear under the title of an ambitious poem at the end (not, however, Ms Hesketh's most successful) called "The Eighth Day". The best poems here are short, personal, unselfconscious. An excellent example, typical of this poet's economy of thought and diction, is "At Four A.M." - a Bishop-like subject which is treated in a Hesketh-like way.

In the nowhere between dark and dawn

a blackbird chips the silence as once it chipped the shell between darkness and light. And I, adrift from myself, in homeless seas, struggle towards an island when a bird-note splinters in song tilting my hands with leaves.

The images here are drawn gracefully out of an imagination which works with closed eyes, whereas McGuckian's and Bishop's poems give the more startling effect of opened amazement in the face of what should not be possible. Phoebe Hesketh's method is, of course, more conventional, and for this reason her poems are easier to read. It is surprising that the work of this sensitive, intelligent and articulate poet is not better known in this country. This selection from her, *Elegies* (also, out-of-print), books has been made with care.

The same kind of neglect has dogged the career of Harry Guest, whose *Elegies* have recently appeared in a tiny pink pamphlet published by Pig Press in Durham. Guest's writing, like Hesketh's, is articulate and mature. The six poetic essays in his new book seem at first to be related to the intellectual wanderings of John Ashbery. Guest's extrusions, though, seem to have a Classical source (Virgil's *Lucretius*) and to owe something, too, to MacNeice. They take place in an autumnal English landscape unthreatened by anything worse than natural age and death. Long, flowing, truly elegiac lines of verse eddy just frequently enough into statements about the nature of poetry and art to make us feel the mental travelling has been worthwhile.

But poetry is neither a pastime nor a public act. It is an ordering and from that arrangement each reader extracts another. It is absurd to limit responses to reason as to a lone-dead man's view of a canon. The air of loving weariness and *fin-de-siècle* calm which Guest manages to convey in these meditations reinforces rather than undermines a philosophy of mystical resignation. Somehow everything in the end will be well: "What the narrow-minded/conceive of as reality is only the first step. We have lived elsewhere."

A recently founded press that calls itself Phoenix-Springwood (why?) is responsible for a very funny collection of monologues embodying the entire poetic works (or is it merely a "selected") of Sergeant Shook (Michael Baldwin on a night out).

Lads I turned poet. I been inspired by Tozzer Who loaded his cabin. With a whole clip of lipsticks And shot the spazzy rep.

Also published by Phoenix-Springwood is a subtle, unostentatious first collection by Nick Stimson, who has a fine eye for place and a disarmingly frank way

of presenting experience. His themes are the seasons, the country, childhood, spacemen - nothing very new. Still, Stimson's poems have a freshness which makes you forget they are variations on old themes.

John Wakeman's *Hopeless Loves and Happy Endings* is a private production that could be the kernel of a longer book published by an established house. One of his poems called "A Sea Family" comes as close as you can to sentimentality without actually melting in bathos. A stillborn boy, an old Glasgow drunk and a Portuguese girl who has drowned herself for lack of love meet, at last, in the sea:

and the old man hugs the baby to his smushed ribs and the girl holds them safe in her flayed arms and they converse together and stroll with the tides and the moon amazed at the bright ships and the great fishes.

There's a great deal of life in Wakeman's simple narratives as well as some wry, welcome humour.

There's life, too, in Keith Sagar's pamphlet, *The Reef*, to which Ted Hughes provides a long and not really-to-the-point introduction. Hughes argues that "in this kind of writing" (he says rather little about Sagar's poems individually) "behind a tensely objective prose, sharply focussed on material activity, one feels another vision, of a different order of things". However accurate a description this is of Hughes' own poetry (or prose) it is doubtful that Sagar's verse can sustain much philosophizing. Hughes is right, though, to say that Sagar's poems are "manifestly plain". There is an air of what Hughes calls "fascinated attention" about them. Sagar works at a disadvantage under the shadow not only of Hughes but of D. H. Lawrence. But the "plain", autobiographical "City Boy", with which the pamphlet begins, is moving and shows Sagar at his simplest (really romantic) best.

Finally, Annakin Press in Peterborough should be congratulated on a beautifully produced collection by Lotte Kramer called *Ice-Break*. Mrs Kramer was born in Germany and much of her work - in painting and in poetry - is an attempt to reconcile herself with two cultures. She is sensitive and honest as a poet, even if her language is unoriginal.

Elemental songs

By Anne Born

GEORGE JOHNSTON (editor):

Rocky Shores: An Anthology of Faroese Poetry
124pp. Paisley: Wilfon Books. £4.
0 905075 10 2

"Cliff falls, the dark houses, rock sheer/ This ominous world" begins one of the poems in this first-ever English language anthology of Faroese poetry. The dominant subject of the nine poems represented is their awesome habitat, the towering basalt cliffs and mountains that paradoxically make the eighteen small Faroese islands appear enormous. One poem likens the island of Viðoy to a ship, with peaks for masts. The islands, braced against the Atlantic roughly midway between the northern coast of Scotland and Iceland, are surrounded and penetrated through channels and fjords by the sea, more often than not savage and sombre.

This elemental setting takes control of much of the poetry. So much greater the contrast, then, of the poems describing love, life in the homes of the green borders down the fjords, where "the roof is whistery" (that is, turf-covered), and human

feelings. But even a loved girl is evoked in terms of the surroundings:

your hair
a waterfall of black
your teeth
faint veins
eyes
tarned beds
you (are)
green grass
flicking straw
while falls
flee-weather rain

Born into such an environment, these poets have an instinctive knowledge of the cycles and processes of nature. In the poem "Bedrock" Karsten Høydal writes:

I sense a soul in your stillness, life moves in you, and longing, you too are in company with us, changing and shaping as you go to wordless dust, which is earth living dust, which is earth.

The work reflects both the starkness and the idyllic character of Faroese life in a style that seems directly inherited from Old Norse - West Norse, to be precise, the language of the ninth century settlers. The Faroese that developed from Norse was not used as a written language until this century, although spoken by the islanders down through the ages and used for the rich oral tradition of ballads, still today sung and danced to. These ballads

which, on the evidence of surveys conducted in Edinburgh and Birmingham, suggests that 40 per cent of hospital deaths reveal, on examination *post mortem*, a wrong diagnosis. How much value ought to be placed on the symbolic or superstitious thoughts towards which Abse is drawn in the poem is difficult to decide. A good case could be made for claiming them to be as morbid as pathological details.

Partly at fault is his tendency to over-elate; while his easy manner contributes to a distinctly readable verse, it detracts from a complete seriousness. There are exceptions, of course, the poems about his mother being good examples, or "In the Gallery", and especially his excellent poem "Bedtime Story" in which the directness of his writing is wonderfully convincing. But he is sometimes guilty of introducing the linguistically low-keyed on inappropriate occasions.

There is, of course, nothing wrong with Abse's generously humane feelings, his bemused, saddened and occasionally defiant compassion, or his alert sense of humour; but one is still entitled to wonder at the attitudes underlying his work. For example, just how tenable is his position of being "way out in the centre"? The phrase occurs at the end of "A Note to Donald Davis in Tennessee". Davis is affectionately addressed and the differences between the two poets are tastefully suggested although neither Davis or Abse's commitments are actually described: "neither of us, I hope, would leave through those doors the right or on the left marked HYGIENE". Fanaticism is not, clearly, but one ought to be passionate about something. It all seems vague and a bit sentimental:

So I speak of small approximate things, of how I saw, in the park, four flamingo standing, one-legged on ice, heads beaming wings.

The trouble is that anything can become a telling "objective correlative" when the poet's mood is powerful enough to invest observation with the necessary feeling. Abse's approach to his predicament seems therefore to be less surprisingly individual than one might expect.

In "Lunch and Afterwards" Abse approaches the gist of his problem. It seems to arise from a contest between his physician's reliance on practical, scientific procedures and his poet's respect for the apparently unreal and irrational, the imagined and mysteriously human factors of life. It is very much to his credit that Abse never refines this issue into an idle antithesis between such slick, shorthand clichés as Materialism and Nature. But even so, one would have thought him peculiarly well-placed to lend the subject the benefit of a more ambitious testimony than "Lunch and Afterwards" presents. A layman is likely to feel that "the morbid verse of facts" which Abse's poetical details are of undeniable value to medicine (especially in the light of a recent report from the Royal College of Pathologists,

Frankly, I don't believe that such a position exists, whether poetically, intellectually or emotionally.

"Of Rabbi Yose", "Snake" and "Of Itzig and his Dog" are drawn from the Jewishness in Abse's background, and are among the best poems in the book. Few people are Jewish, Welsh, a doctor and a poet: it is this combination that makes Abse's poetry so distinct. And yet, given his resources, Abse's work is in the end less startlingly individual and less conspicuously unique than one has a right to expect.

The meritorious and the needy

By Nigel Cross

JIM MCGUIGAN:

Writers and the Arts Council
134pp. Arts Council of Great Britain. £2.50.
0 7287 0285 5

Although the Arts Council introduced its first bursary scheme only in 1966, there is nothing new in the concept of state patronage of writers. Since 1870 the Royal Literary Fund has been giving grants to writers in financial difficulties, and since 1838 the Treasury has been awarding Royal Bounty grants and Civil List pensions. What is new in official (though not in private) patronage is the idea of sponsoring a production of a particular literary work. Both the RLF and the Treasury gave grants on the basis of past achievement and were unconcerned about future productivity. The nearest any came to anticipating the Arts Council's literature policy was George IV, who paid a hundred guineas a year for distinguished literary achievement to each of the ten associates of the Royal Society of Literature, including Coleridge.

Dickens tried and failed to get a similar scheme off the ground. Now, fifteen years after awarding its first grant, the Arts Council judges its Grants to Writers scheme a failure. If its expectations of patronage had been more modest then the scheme might have been accounted a success: the grants have, after all, gone to writers - which is half the battle.

Jim McGuigan's study *Writers and the Arts Council* is not the least of the Literature Department's achievements. McGuigan was given access to the Arts Council files and correspondence and conducted a number of revealing interviews with cooperative panel members and writers. From a relatively narrow research

base he has succeeded in constructing a convincing and well-documented picture of the social and financial problems of authors. With the style of a Gulliver in Laputa, he patiently dissects the inconsistencies of the literature policy and makes a series of tentative suggestions, most of which the Arts Council would be wise to adopt.

From the very start of the Grants to Writers scheme it was clear that there was a confusion between merit and need. As the aim of the grants was to aid and even to incubate Literature with a capital "L", grants could not be awarded to writers, however professional and needy, who were not considered "literary". However, when an author of irreproachable literaryness applied, as did Stephen Spender, for example, the Literature Panel felt unable to turn him down simply because he owned a few Picasso's. Most young writers, meanwhile, were effectively excluded from awards because the panel was unwilling to risk grants on promise rather than achievement.

McGuigan makes it clear that the majority of successful applicants were middle-aged, well-educated and in no particular need. In a sample year, 1976-7, he found that several writers subsidized by the Arts Council were already earning around £7000-£7500 a year. Roy Fuller, Chairman of the Literature Panel until 1977, gave a fairly typical reaction: "I must say such grants (perhaps £2000 or £3000) stuck in my gut. I mean, even those of us not on the bread-line would not sneer at a tax-free windfall to buy a new car or have the house painted." McGuigan concludes that "need" should be taken far more seriously by the Finance Committee as ground for an award.

The Literature Department maintains a (theoretically) rigorous position: "The two main criteria used in considering applications from writers are merit and need, and one without

the other is not sufficient. Clearly it would be as improper for the Arts Council to offer money to a mediocre writer who was suffering hardship as it is proper for the Royal Literary Fund for its part to make purely eleemosynary grants." This apparently reasonable division of responsibilities runs into difficulties in two major areas.

First, the RLF can assist only "established" writers, and although it takes a comparatively lenient view of literary merit it does not, as a rule, give grants to young writers. Most of its applicants are over fifty. Young writers are therefore the least likely to receive support from any source, though the most likely to use Arts Council money to finance writing projects. McGuigan takes the view that the literature panel could do much more to encourage young writers, including the acceptance of unpublished work as evidence of literary merit.

Secondly, writers who are in need are not always, not even usually, those writers who are regarded as in the front rank. The Arts Council's favourite adjective to express a positive view of a writer's work is "mediocre". It is unlikely that the work of more than a dozen or so British novelists each century could be considered first-rate, yet the Arts Council gave grants to about 150 novelists in fifteen years. Charles C. Osborne has claimed that one of the Literature Department's tasks is to "identify and assist the next James Joyce", but not, presumably, to the exclusion of lesser writers. It is both impossible and undesirable that literature should consist of Dorothy Richardson but not Rhoda Broughton, of Joseph Conrad but not Mervyn Jones, of Yeats but not Sturge Moore - to name both first-rate and second-rate writers who received Civil List pensions. McGuigan, however, is sceptical of the whole concept of "literary merit". No one was able to satisfactorily define it for

him: it was "serious writing"; in Melvyn Bragg's view it was fairly represented by the literary output of the Literature Panel. In the final analysis then, "serious writers" appear to be a group of people whose work is well regarded by themselves.

The Literature Department chose to interpret McGuigan's findings that most sponsored work would have been written anyway, without an Arts Council grant, as an important reason for ending grants to writers. But since McGuigan demonstrates that the majority of grants to writers were awarded to the relatively affluent, it is hardly surprising that they made little material difference to the composition of a literary work.

What emerges most clearly from McGuigan's report is the suspicion with which grants to writers are viewed by those whose job it is to sponsor or adjudicate applications. There seem to be two schools of thought: one, which might now be called the Fuller school, believes that if writers can't earn a living through literature, then they should take a job and write in their spare time. Eliot shared this view, and believed that the only real solution to the problem of the struggling full-time writer was "regular work of some kind". Novelists seem more inclined to subscribe to the other school, still best represented by Gissing, who believed passionately in full-time writing and equally passionately in securing a decent financial return. To those detractors who claim that adversity is good for authors and toughens them up, Gissing has a neat retort: "We are always being told that the struggle against adverse circumstances is for the good of our art, and that with prosperity comes relaxation of effort. It is so, undoubtedly, with some men, but chiefly those who have nothing very particular to say."

As McGuigan shows, it is the novelists who most regularly apply

for Arts Council grants. Another Council survey, Peter Mann's report on novel readers, showed that only 6% of readers (who in turn represent only 3% of the population) ever pick up a "literary" novel. Mann suggests that some form of subsidy should be offered to libraries to encourage them to buy uncommercial novels. Such interventionist policies are part of Arts Council orthodoxy. McGuigan records that the Keynesian concept of the Arts Council was to stimulate demand for art forms that were in decline, and to preserve the restoration of Covent Garden from a wartime dance hall to an opera house). The Literature Department's emphasis on conjuring up an audience for the literary novel is of course welcome. But in today's climate the novelist has to be subsidized by someone other than a bankrupt publisher in order to write the subsidized novel.

There are those who argue that the writer who cannot find a paying public should abandon authorship altogether. This would consign most of English literature to oblivion. There was only a brief period between about 1840 and 1880 when the tastes of the reading public approximately matched the production of the best literature; when the numbers of readers matched the production of books. One of the dangerous misconceptions of a policy designed to create more readers is that such readers are unlikely to exist in sufficient numbers to make a scrap of difference to the plight of poets and "literary" novelists. Even PLR, which is intended to establish a fair economic relationship between readers and writers, can do little for those novelists whose works (in their lifetime) are read only by 3% of the population. Today the state must act as the patron of literature as it does for other "minority" arts. Literature has never suffered as a result of generous patronage: the enemy has always been meanness.

Binominal theorem

By John Weightman

ROMAIN GARY:

Vie et Mort d'Emile Ajar
42pp. Paris. Gallimard.

When the novelist, Romain Gary, committed suicide some months ago, he left behind this small time-bomb to explode after his death and cause rifts among the members of the French literary establishment. It is an account of how, from the early 1970s onwards, he wrote four successful novels under the pseudonym of Emile Ajar, while continuing to publish other works under the name he had already long made famous, *L'Education européenne*, and the Goncourt prize-winner, *Le Racine du ciel*. His motive, he says, was a desire to renew himself, to escape from the persona in which the critics had imprisoned him. He eventually put it about that the Ajar books were the work of his nephew, Paul Pavlowitch, a real-life but rather enigmatic person, who lent himself to the deception. None of the well-known critics guessed the truth; some denounced Ajar/Pavlowitch as being greatly inferior to his uncle, while others thought him much better. In short, the unrelenting current critical opinion in the Parisian journals was cruelly exposed.

This point can be readily accepted. Paris is a cliquish place where literary politics are rife, and so the many less genuine critics, according to their temporary level of authority, tend to oscillate between prudent time-serving and touchy importance. Gary tells a depressing and typical anecdote about a critic who praised one book of his to the skies, and then panned the following one, not for any intrinsic reason - as he himself admitted - but because Gary had omitted to send him a

thank-you letter in response to the favourable article.

It was an ingenious act of revenge on the novelist's part to escape from such pettiness by inventing the alter ego, Ajar, and writing one notable best-seller under that name, *La Vie devant soi*, which was eventually turned into a film with no less a star than Simone Signoret in the main part. Gary claims, with some exaggeration, that, in so doing, he had brought off the most extensive literary hoax since Macpherson's *Ossian*. Since he felt this, it seems strange that he should not have preferred to stay alive and enjoy the sensation of being the author of a best-seller. Perhaps there is a touch of aggressive masochism about many suicides: "I'll show them, and then they'll be sorry!" Judging by the ample evidence contained in all his later works, Gary's main reason for killing himself was that he couldn't bear the onset of old age, and especially the decline of sexual potency, coupled with the continued strain of contemplating the world and its evils, of which, as a very cosmopolitan Jewish refugee, he had seen a great deal. One of the Ajar books in particular, *L'Angoisse du Roi Salomon*, is a long and passionate complaint about the Absent God's indifference to humanity. So, by opting out and leaving behind this barbed testament, Gary was presumably getting his own back in two different ways: he was returning God's gift of consciousness with a gesture of disgust, and administering a retrospective slap at the Parisian critics who had not given him what he felt to be his due.

Sad to say, apart from discomforting some critics who no doubt deserve to be pilloried, the book falls a little flat. There is really no comparison with the *Ossian* phenomenon. Macpherson was an unknown young man when he put together his patchwork of translations and fantasies to produce the pseudo-Gaelic epic which crystallized so many Romantic

emotions that were present in the late eighteenth-century atmosphere; the mystery, in his case, is how a patent nonsense writer, who later went on to enjoy an average, worldly career, should have displayed such flair for the expression of a collective mood before he was thirty, and should have hoodwinked real geniuses, such as Goethe. Gary, as a mature writer, simply played a prank on the Parisian literary world by using a pseudonym, but there is no fundamental difference between the Ajar books and the novels he wrote under his original name. Contrary to what he implies, he did not betray himself from the creative point of view. There is, in any case, a contradiction in his argument; he points out that the critics ought to have guessed the truth, because of the many resemblances in style and incident between the Gary and the Ajar novels; if so, where is the renewal?

On reading some of the books of the two series side by side for the first time, I began by thinking that he perhaps gives free rein to his characteristic emotionalism as Ajar rather than as Gary, but on reflection even this is not so; *Clair de femme*, which he published as Gary, is on the same level of feverish anguish as the Ajar novel, *L'Angoisse du Roi Salomon*. All these later works, in fact, seem to be fragments of a man on the verge of living by someone who is overwhelmed by the mystery of time and organic decay and the absence of an ultimate meaning. But it is one of the ironies of literature that even a genuine feeling, when it is given overheated expression, does not result in the best kind of art.

Gary was a true *angoué*, but alas he was also, at the same time and in spite of his talent, an unbridled sentimentalist. His suicide proves the authenticity of his suffering, but it does not alter the fact that his works, both as Gary and as Ajar, lack the hardness which differentiates the really good from the middlegood.

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The fall of the Chancellor

By J. B. Trapp

J. A. GUY:
The Public Career of Sir Thomas More
220pp. Brighton: Harvester. £20.
0 8527 963 X

The trouble with trying to find the "real" Thomas More is that More is everybody's Daddy. Fifty-five years ago, R. W. Chambers claimed that there had already been too many father-killers. "If," he wrote in *The Saga and the Myth of Sir Thomas More*, "the historians have no use for Sir Thomas More except as a terrible example of tergiversation, let them hand him over to us", the professors of English language and literature. The Yale editors and others – professors of English for the most part, rather than of history – have carried on. Chambers also complained of the difficulties More gave him. Who could believe in one so free of flaw? Not subsequent historians, certainly. Vigorously led by G. R. Elton, they have transformed Chambers's image – based ultimately on the estimates of More's friend Erasmus and his son-in-law William Roper – with the help of a vastly increased knowledge of the politics of Henrician England. Chambers's portrait, and its modifications by modern Catholic scholars, have been deeply scarred. Here now is a book by a historian, full of Eltonian virtues, and essential reading both for idolaters and for iconoclasts.

About Easter 1533, Sir Thomas More – as he then was – exhorted his countrymen to "stand by the old, without the contrary change of any point of our old belief, for anything brought up for new". The words appear towards the end of his *Apology*, penultimate of his ponderous English defences of the Church and of the clergy of England, begun five years before at the behest of Cuthbert Tunstall, his old friend as well as his bishop. Their immediate application is to the writings of Luther, William Tyndale and other heretics, but they have also a wider reference. They are an epitome of More's religious and political convictions – in so far as it is possible to speak of two elements in a system of thought so closely integrated.

They also apply to the arguments of a little anonymous pamphlet concerning the dissension between the lay and the ecclesiastical jurisdictions, published a few months previously and written by someone whom More refers to as "Sir John Some-say". Among other things, the pamphlet had called on the King in Parliament to legislate against clerical abuses and exactions, against clerical conspicuous consumption and against the methods used by the ecclesiastical courts in their dealings with heresy. More, meddling in politics after public withdrawal from the political scene, had to be cautious. Over a year of freedom remained to him (he entered the Tower on April 17, 1534) and over two of life (he was executed on July 6, 1535), but he can surely not have wanted to expose himself. So he affected to think his opponent a rather simple-minded ecclesiastic, a parish priest perhaps, or a religious recluse, rather than what he was: an elderly and respected lawyer, one Christopher St. German. St. German, as J. A. Guy now makes clear, functioned as a sort of one-man think-tank for Thomas Cromwell, who took up some of his ideas directly and satiated away or recycled others. Some of St. German's notions in the remarkable memorandum of 1531 discovered by Dr. Guy among Cromwell's papers resemble those of *Utopia* – forced labour, for criminals and restitution of stolen property, for instance. Others – no help for the unemployed who refuse work offered them – have an almost Thatchettian ring.

It is one of the many merits of Guy's book to have fished St. German out of the practical-political dustbin to which he has so far been consigned and to have established his importance in the power struggle of the late 1520s and early 1530s. Further merits: the St. German in

promised for another book, which one hopes soon to see. *The Public Career of Sir Thomas More* gives us a foretaste of this, but its main burden is a mass of new information about More as a state official. Specialized, and fiercely focused on the time between More's appointment as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in 1525 and his resignation of the Lord Chancellorship in 1532, it is based on a familiarity with the documents of a kind that can perhaps only be acquired in the employ of the Public Record Office. Guy confines himself strictly to More's English career. We get next to no glimpse of More the ambassador or More the humanist. A pity perhaps, since the humanist dimension is not irrelevant to the public career, but inevitable in default of new evidence. Doctrinal matters also run a poor second to political allegiances and procedures. Guy's book is clearly written, if not precisely an easy read. Effort is well rewarded, however, with a satisfyingly calm and well-proportioned picture of the gradual isolation of More as a political influence during the years of his Lord Chancellorship.

This is one of Guy's strong points. Another is his survey of More's career from the moment before August 1517 when he became a member of the King's Council to the point at which he replaced Wolsey in October 1529. More's conduct towards Wolsey at the opening of the Reformation Parliament is described much more illuminatingly – if not more sympathetically – than ever before. The knowledge of Wolsey's legal procedures embodied in Guy's previous book on *The Cardinal's Court* also combines with his more recent investigation of other records to make him the ideal assessor of More as England's chief magistrate. A myth or two goes by the board. By the time Guy has done with his figures there is not much left of the belief that More liquidated a vast backing of suits, or of some simple-minded interpretations of the old punning quatrain:

When More some time Chancellor had been
No more sula did remain.
The like will never more be seen
Till More be there again.

Wolsey made the machinery, More kept it running – ever the skilful, conservative work-horse he had been long ago as one of London's under-sheriffs.

Guy appears to have even better advantage in his readings of the events of November 1530 to May 1532, and of More's role in them as manipulator and manipulated (more active in Parliament than has hitherto been recognized). Again he draws on newly discovered manuscript material. The silence in which More finally took refuge has been too comprehensively read back on to his actions, so that it has sometimes seemed as if he all along stood like some patient rock from which the waves of reform, revolution, inquiry and royal displeasure were driven back upon themselves. His situation was always precarious, from the moment when a layman who had already accepted the commission to defend his Church in writing – he took over from Wolsey as the compromise appointment to avoid both the secular and the spiritual contenders: the noble Earl of Suffolk, whom the Duke of Norfolk was determined at all costs to keep out, and Tunstall, the prelate. He may have had Wolsey's half-hearted support to add to Norfolk's. Though he lacked the power-base of Wolsey when Wolsey took office, he was the best that the clergy could hope, at that moment, to do. What he offered was experience of Council and Chancery work and the talents of an "ex-diplomat skilled in international law and mercantile practice".

Once in office, though, his political clout was limited by the shift in the centre of gravity towards the Court. There was also that great text in *Leviticus* about the man who took his brother's wife, which was troubling Henry. To trip on it was political damnation. By 1530, when More seems finally to have told Henry that he could not accept the royal request, his last royal policy was linked to the divorce. More could not

openly oppose and remain Lord Chancellor. He could only procrastinate, while Henry, who seems almost to the last to have believed that he could win his old Counsellor over, sent him to his time theologians for instruction.

Meanwhile, More did not neglect his duties vis-à-vis heresy, even sometimes exceeding his powers. Whether he found the sort of satisfaction in so doing that some of his critics believe is another matter. Guy's address to this difficult and unpleasant question is exemplary, avoiding both the disingenuousness of Chambers and of some modern Catholic apologists and the over-reaction of modern anti-Moreans. By the time More was Chancellor, anticlericalism in England had crystallized round the Church's proceedings against heretics and round ecclesiastical wealth, exactions and abuses. The catalyst in the process was the divorce crisis and, in particular, Clement VII's advocacy of Henry's cause to Rome. More's assessment is accurately reflected in his famous three wishes, as reported by Roper and repeated by implication in the epitaph he composed for himself: peace among the princes (satisfied until 1538 by the Treaty of Cambrai, 1529), heresy put down, and Christendom without schism. To this end anti-clericalism had to be contained – More was a great believer in containment – though men far more powerful than he were leaders of the anti-clerical party. Their proposals entailed the intervention of the King in Parliament. Cromwell, the rising star, was using statutory reform with skill. More, having lost Norfolk's support, had also lost Tunstall, translated to Durham. He could only struggle for the status quo.

Caesaropapism, a principle received at first with suspicion by Henry, gradually became more acceptable to the King after he had absorbed the import of the collection of authorities against the legitimacy of his marriage. More's backing came almost entirely from the Lords, and chiefly from the lords spiritual, the hard-core conservatives in the Commons having little force. "The wonder is surely," as Guy says, "not that More would ultimately fail, but that he ever believed he might succeed." Here Guy is again at his best in his account of day-to-day moves though one may wonder in what sense More believed that he would succeed, at Westminster at least.

This is the context in which Guy sets "the most comprehensive reform manifesto devised in the entire reign of Henry VIII", a remarkable document drafted by St. German and another. This contained a blue-print to alleviate poverty and unemployment by the establishment of a development fund and by job creation. It also called for a "great standing council" of clergy and laymen to review urgent questions – Scripture in English, the spread of heresy, the validity of canon law and canonical custom, ecclesiastical abuses. St. German was to a large extent repeating anti-clerical chestnuts though he was, as Guy asserts, drawing on John Gerson for them, but on Henry of Hesse. Whether the document represents the first occasion of antagonism between St. German and More is not certain. What is clear is that Cromwell filed it away and later made good use of it for the Supplication of the Commons against the Ordinaries in 1532 and in the Poor Law of 1536.

As Chancellor, More had to deliver to the House the opinions favourable to Henry's plea that his marriage to Katherine was invalid. It was this, Roper tells us, that caused him to canvass resignation on grounds of ill-health. Guy is enviably sure there was nothing wrong with More's health – ignoring what the patient says in another context – believing that More stayed on because he thought Henry might still win. A letter to More from Katherine of Aragon's uncle, the Emperor Charles V, might, after all, have wrecked everything. More refused to take delivery after he had been given the drift of it by the Imperial ambassador. It certainly looks as if he continued to trust in Henry and to underestimate the ex-



A wood engraving by the German artist Erhard Schön (c. 1500-1542) attacking Martin Luther as an instrument of the Devil. The picture, probably the first instance of an actual likeness used in print, is included in William Weaver's *Masters of Caricature*: from Hogarth and Gillray to Scarle and Levine edited by Ann Gould (240pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £15. 0 297 7790 4).

tent to which power was shifting away from the Court to Parliament. Henry was now the manipulated and manipulated. Cromwell and Cramer the manipulators. More, in turn, may not fully have realized the isolation of himself and the "Argoness" party until after the failure of their delegation to Henry, the Answer of the Ordinaries in 1532 and the subsequent intervention of the King against the clergy as "but half our subjects, yea, and scarce our subjects" (a favourite formulation, as it happens, of Thomas Cromwell's). After the Submission of the Clergy had been almost at once enacted by a rump Convocation and enacted by a few on May 15-16, 1532, More was clear that his career as a royal servant was over. At three next afternoon he made his defiance public by surrendering the Great Seal.

Guy's account of the political events of More's Chancellorship is full, deft and riveting, and the impossibility of More's predicament is exactly and sympathetically defined. By May 16 Cromwell had so clearly won that there was no point any longer in hanging on to make the best of the worst. Withdrawal from public office so as to see to the

"mending of my own [faults] in living" could now seem morally valid. The tragedy was that withdrawal could not save him. If he would not publicly conform, private More was as much a danger as public More to a régime that demanded absolute conformity.

We meet private More explicitly only in the two brilliant final pages of this book. The whole, however, has told us much to help form our view of the whole man – humanist, parent and *devotus* as well as public figure. It tells us far more than we have so far known about the intricacies and pressures of event and intrigue, the policies that the lawyer-intellectual had to wrestle with – as he had long ago warned himself in the first book of *Utopia* that he would – and that drove him finally to execution and a place among, as Guy puts it, "the very few who have enlarged the horizon of the human spirit".

This is surely, along with some of the Yale edition's introductions, the most important monograph on its subject to have appeared in the past half-century.

At first hand

By Antonia Gransden

DAVID C. DOUGLAS and GEORGE W. GREENAWAY (Editors):
English Historical Documents
Volume II: 1042-1189
Second Edition.
1083pp. Eyre Methuen/Oxford University Press. £60.
0 413 32500 8

The series *English Historical Documents* initiated thirty years ago under the general editorship of D. C. Douglas was designed to cover in several massive volumes the whole of English history. It is now nearly complete. It has made available in English translation to students, for each well-defined period, essential documents and selections from the principal narrative sources. Each volume is thematically arranged, and contains a scholarly introduction and a bibliographical survey, besides having introductions and bibliographies for each section. Thus for the first time students who know little or no Latin (or Old English or Norman French) can easily consult

original sources, and no longer have to rely on the conclusions presented in "secondary" authorities; they can understand how scholars reached those conclusions, and even test their validity.

Inevitably such collections of texts become out-of-date. New research alters historians' opinions, and new publications make bibliographical revision necessary. It is, therefore, gratifying to have a second edition of Professor Douglas's and George W. Greenaway's volume for the period 1042-1189 which was first published in 1953. The contents are substantially the same as in the original edition; time has tended to confirm the wisdom of opinions which the editors then expressed, and their choice of documents. However, they have updated the bibliographical apparatus and taken advantage of new editions (which are principally of narrative sources). They have also improved their translations in places, partly with the help of translations provided by their own labours. Finally, the general appearance of the volume is enhanced by the use of larger type.

Serious amusements

By Colin Macleod

JEFFREY HENDERSON (Editor):
Aristophanes in Interpretation
Essays in Interpretation
237pp. Cambridge University Press.
£15.
0 521 23120 5

"Let us say many funny things and many serious things." Thus the chorus of initiates in the *Frogs*. The simplicity of their words is disarming; but it also sums up the main problem of Aristophanes' interpreters: what sort of blend of funny and serious is his comedy, or where is it one and where the other? Those who try to answer this question meet other difficulties too. Aristophanic comedy has triumphantly survived to attain a special popularity in the late twentieth century; but it is tied to its original time and circumstances, the festival of Dionysus and the city of Athens; in a way that Attic tragedy is not. This means not only that the meaning or the full flavour of many allusions eludes us, but also that the author's relation to his public is a peculiarly acute problem for a modern student. Further, whereas we have a number of complete plays by three different Greek tragedians, there are no more than miserable fragments or notices of the other exponents of Old Comedy to set beside Aristophanes: we cannot see him in or against his genre. The result is that Jeffrey Henderson can claim with some justification in intro-

ducing this book that scholars have tended more and more to think of him as just a brilliant humorist; and yet, to quote the man himself again, "comedy too knows about morality". This book collects five essays whose purpose is to take Aristophanes seriously. Lowell Edmunds and Jeffrey Henderson offer thorough interpretations of the *Acharnians* and the *Lystrata*; Henderson's paper looks in fact like the forerunner of a commentary on the latter play. Martha Nussbaum re-examines the treatment of Socrates in the *Clouds*, and Hans-Joachim Newiger the theme of peace. Michael Silk tries to define afresh the nature and qualities of Aristophanes' lyrics. Space forbids a discussion of all these papers, so I comment briefly on only three.

Edmunds argues subtly and ingeniously that the *Acharnians* does not fall into two discrete halves as many readers have thought. In the second part of the play, when Diaconopolis is gleefully culling the fruits of his peace, he still embodies the meaning of his name ("Just City"). The justice concerned is bound up with city festivals and country matters: war is repugnant to the peace-loving citizen. In the first part of the play, when Diaconopolis has shown that the war is not a just one, but because it flouts Bacchus and Aphrodite. This is well said; but the same chorus which congratulates Diaconopolis comments on his selfishness. As

By Peter Howell

R. O. A. M. LYNE:
The Latin Love Poets from Catullus to Horace
330pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £12.50 (paperback, £5.25).
0 19 814453 9

Latin love-poetry was a short-lived phenomenon. The generally accepted view is that Catullus, primarily as a result of his obsession with a woman whom he called Lesbia, imported a personal element into his erotic poetry which had been absent from that of his Greek and Latin predecessors. The example of Catullus was followed, in different ways, by Propertius, Tibullus, Horace, and Ovid; but after the latter had been exiled, no-one else seemed to attempt the genre again. This gives it a life of about sixty years.

In his lively and useful introduction to the genre (the book's title is a little misleading, even if chronologically exact; the last chapter is in fact on Ovid's *Amores*), R. O. A. M. Lyne takes the content as seriously as the form. This is unusual, for classical scholars have been, on the whole, notoriously unwilling to consider romantic love a serious subject. However, Dr Lyne, following the lead set by his Balliol colleague Jasper Griffin in an important article on "Augustan poetry and the life of luxury" (*Journal of Roman Studies*, 1976), is anxious to emphasize that to see these poets as merely adopting a persona, or following literary tradition, rather than actually writing about real life, involves a falsification of their purpose. "Love poetry is usually (among other things) the expression of an individual who is or has been in love – how often Classical scholars obscure that fact!" Even Corinna (as without much plausibility) taken to be real – all the less convincingly in that Lyne rightly stresses the element of comic parody of Ovid's elegiac predecessors in the *Amores*. Many an old schoolmaster would be horrified to read of Horace's "cheerful sexual catholicity, the reality of which we have no reason to doubt". Lyne's interpretation of *Odes* I. 5 differs strikingly from that of the best commentators, Nisbet and Hub-

bard. For them, Pyrrha's grotto, with its bed of roses, is "a stage property of the Greek novel"; for Lyne, "the setting . . . is meant to be essentially realistic". Horace is, of course, the unexpected figure in the book, and even Lyne sees him as basically "a love poet of the anti-romantic, more particularly anti-Elegiac reaction".

Lyne announces that "the book combines literary criticism with literary history". This is welcome, although no longer (thank heaven) a revolutionary approach for a classicist. Some of his judgments are disconcerting. Catullus 76, described by Gordon Williams as "a subtle and powerful composition, without model or imitation in ancient classical poetry", is, according to Lyne, "a poetic failure". Clearly Williams and Lyne have different criteria for poetic success, which may be no bad thing. One is surprised also to find Catullus 8 – "one of the poems that Macaulay said he could not read without tears", as Fordyce approvingly notes in his standard commentary – described as "very much tinged with humour", although the only evidence offered in support of this is a couple of doubtful instances of irony. In his analysis of this poem, as occasionally elsewhere, Lyne gets a little carried away; he suggests that the words *nec puella nolebat* indicate "less than total enthusiasm", which seems an unfair interpretation of a Latin double negative (one that in any case contrasts deliberately with *nunc non vult* in line 9), and his view of the poem as a study in schizophrenia leads to the implausible suggestion that "nobis [in line 5] may in fact be a true plural, 'beloved by us'. Strong Catullus associates himself momentarily and as it were unwillingly with weak Catullus in his adoration."

Lyne has, he says, "tried to keep Roman society and the relation of poet and society in view". He starts with a chapter entitled "Traditional Attitudes to Love, the Moral and Social Background", here he discusses attitudes towards marriage with hardly a word about the production of children, which may be less odd in consideration of Roman marriage than in the case of almost any other society, but is still odd. He argues that the "life of love" proclaimed by his poets, with its rejection of conventional morality, according to which sexual gratification was to be found either in a usually loveless marriage or in casual encounters on

a more or less commercial basis, but not in romantic affairs, and with its emphasis on passion and idleness, was in conflict with Augustan attempts to re-establish traditional values. These lovers even go so far as to label themselves mad (Lyne claims that Catullus "does not more or less willingly accept and emblazon 'disease' or 'madness' like Propertius or Tibullus", but in Poem 7 he calls himself "insane").

The least satisfactory part of the book is the long chapter on Propertius. The only way to cope with that enigmatic author is to emphasize the element of wit, but, although Lyne claims to have "repeatedly

pointed to Propertian wit", he is far less sympathetic in his analysis of this aspect than Margaret Hubbard in her book of 1974. In fact, his account somehow leaves one more exasperated with Propertius than ever. "The book is aimed in the first place at sixth-form and undergraduate students of Latin literature", begins the preface. "More advanced scholars may not find it entirely negligible. I also want students in comparative literature and literature in translation courses and other non-specialists (the 'general reader') to be able to use and enjoy it". So Lyne quotes extensively, and translates all his quotations. His own style

is sometimes racy ("Ovid was ruddy", "Tibullus is . . . getting smugged"), sometimes informal ("I think" three times on pp. 62-3; "I must say it doesn't surprise me"), sometimes journalistic (on p. 118 Tibullus is "our loving equestrian", then – one paragraph later – "our credulous, facile and masochistic love poet"), but usually serviceable enough. It would be helpful if he could decide which modern instrument he thinks represents the Greek *aulos* or Roman *tibia*; its performers here include a "clarinetist" (sic), "flute-girls", and "oboe-players". The book is rather clumsily produced, with a fair number of mis-

prints to disagree with. That is no blame; indeed, it will achieve its purpose of helping us think seriously about Aristophanes all the better because it provokes dissent. It should also make us the reader to find him, as he himself hopes in the *Symposium*, funny but not ridiculous.

There is much, then, in this book to disagree with. That is no blame; indeed, it will achieve its purpose of helping us think seriously about Aristophanes all the better because it provokes dissent. It should also make us the reader to find him, as he himself hopes in the *Symposium*, funny but not ridiculous.

Crucial considerations

By David Bain

JAMES DIGGLE:
Studies on the Text of Euripides
127pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £12.50.
0 19 814019 3

For most of this century the "standard" text of the plays of Euripides has been the three-volume edition by Gilbert Murray in the Oxford Classical Texts series. Although Murray's virtues as an editor out-weighed his defects, among which were a tendency to pay too much heed to the occasionally brilliant but wayward Verrall and the habit of explaining a corrupt text by the assumption that it would have been made clear to an audience by means of stage-business, his edition is ripe for replacement by reason of the progress in Euripidean studies that has been made during this century. To mention only two of the areas in which scholars have made advances since his day: much more is now known about the relationships of Euripides' manuscripts (particularly because of the work of Turyn and Zuntz), and as regards his lyrics far more system and objectivity obtain (although it must be said that in this most difficult field of study much remains controversial or obscure).

The daunting task of replacement has been undertaken for the Oxford

University Press by James Diggle, who in the work under review gives us a companion to the second volume of his text. This text-volume, which will be the first of the series to appear, has been delayed through unforeseen circumstances.

Dr Diggle presents a series of notes of varying length on problem passages in the six plays to be included in the second text-volume. There are also a number of cross-references (sometimes with additions and corrections) to treatments of other passages in the plays which have already appeared in article form. These notes abound in acute diagnosis and decisively settle many problems in the text and interpretation of these (and other) plays and in Greek literature (there are full and well-ordered indexes). It is only rarely, as at *Suppl.* 508-9, that one feels that there exists more of a problem than Diggle has made out. A great deal of new material regarding metre, diction and usage is presented. Scholars interested in these topics will have constant recourse to this book.

There is no discussion of the manuscripts or of the history of the text. For this we must await the preface to Diggle's text and for the who, like the present reviewer, believe these things are better discussed in the vernacular this is a disappointment. As it happens, however, manuscript questions do not figure to any great extent in determin-

ing the text of the plays in the second volume since five of the six are "alphabetic plays" for whose transmission we rely on only one independent witness, the fourteenth-century manuscript L. The manuscript P which Murray, siding with Willems against Wecklein, regarded as a twin of L has been shown to be for these plays a copy of L made before the Byzantine scholar Demetrius Triclinius had completed his corrections to its text. In such circumstances, a text where variants are scarce to the point of non-existence, it is conjectures that must interest the editor and Diggle time and again revives good conjectures that had been consigned to Murray's apparatus or, worse still, to oblivion. The contrast between his editorial approach and that of recent editors of individual plays in the Teubner series is stark – these last in addition persist in treating P as an independent witness; his text will look very different from theirs and will be, I am sure, much nearer to reflecting what Euripides wrote.

It remains to congratulate all concerned for the high quality of production and attractive appearance of a book which must have made great demands of the printer. I spotted only three misprints. Günther Jachmann being given the wrong initial on p. 23, the omission of the book number in the reference to Horace on p. 103, and a wrong cross-reference at *Joi* 981 (p. 111).

commentary

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The bardic bearer

By James Campbell

Somhairle MacGill-Eain - Sorley MacLean
National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh

With characteristic lack of self-effacement, Hugh MacDiarmid wrote to Sorley MacLean in 1977: "There is, I think, no doubt about you and I being the two best poets in Scotland today." Following MacDiarmid's death, MacLean is regarded today as Scotland's greatest living poet; an importance attested to by the demands made on him to read his work in Europe, America and Canada, as well as in Britain. Extraordinary, when you consider that very few of the people who make such demands (even in Scotland) are able to understand more than a word of his poetry. At readings - and he is the greatest reader of his own work I have ever heard - he recites a line-by-line translation, usually intended only to be a crib, an aid to "hearing" the poem, before delivering his sonorous, melodious Gaelic.

The part of the current exhibition at the National Library of Scotland which documents his early life is full of mention of MacLeans and Mathiesons and Nicholsonson who were bards, singers, pipers and tradition-bearers; of Malcolm, the poet's father, MacLean says: "In some songs his timing and weight were such that I now find it difficult to listen to these songs from anyone else." Similarly with his grandmother - a tradition-bearer of great quality born in the middle of

the last century - whose versions of Gaelic songs MacLean describes as being "the first great artistic impact on me." When MacLean talks of "the unbearable decline of Gaelic" during the 1930s, he is regretting not only the loss of a language but of a history.

His older relatives were people who had personal experience of the emptying of the Highlands and Islands by Anglicized Highland chiefs with nothing in mind but their own pockets. The Clearances removed most of the Gaelic-speaking people to the Lowlands and to the various "New Worlds", therefore making it incumbent on those who remained to bear the Gaelic tradition of music and song. The survival of the tradition today owes much to MacLean himself, whom Professor William Gillies, in his Introduction to the exhibition catalogue, praises for "Seeking out and nursing the living strengths of the language - the eloquent passion of popular song, the richness of earlier poetry".

In addition to the many fascinating photographs in the exhibition, there are early reviews, magazines, letters (mainly to and from his close friends MacDiarmid and James Caird), and first editions of his books: from the first - *17 Poems for 6d.*, published with and for the late Robert Garioch - to his selected poems, *Reothairt is Contraigh*, which appeared in 1977.

Sorley MacLean is a modern poet in a great tradition, and the old songs to which his work owes so much have in turn found new poetry in him. On the occasion of his seventieth birthday, the exhibition is a worthy tribute.



A detail from Alexander Moffat's "Sorley MacLean" (1979), to be seen in the "Seven Poets Exhibition" at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh.

A question of honour

By Gerry Ashton

The Mayor of Zalamea
Cottesloe Theatre

The Mayor of Zalamea has always been considered one of the best of the Golden Age comedias. It has a clear, racy plot, varies the comic with the serious, and yields a number of important themes, among them justice, honour and vengeance. Pedro Crespo, a wealthy peasant, takes a captain from Philip II's army into his house as part of his duty to offer shelter to the king's men. The captain rapes Isabel, Pedro's daughter, confident that he is immune from prosecution except by a military court which, he feels sure, will regard his offence as petty. Isabel is only a peasant after all. Pedro Crespo is made mayor of Zalamea and settles his score with the captain by sentencing him and having him garroted. Though his action is technically illegal - the captain should have been tried by court martial and beheaded not garroted since he is a nobleman as well as a soldier - the verdict and sentence of death are correct and confirmed by the king.

The meaning of all this is clear. There is an honour; a self-respect which has nothing to do with wealth or social class but only with behaviour. Don Alvaro, the captain, believes himself to be intrinsically a man of honour because he is an aristocrat. The farcical Don Mendoza, a kind of flaccid version of Don Alvaro, a stock "derelict" aristocrat who carries a toothpick to prove he has just eaten sumptuously, also feels that honour comes from his nobility. Don Lope, the general, sees honour in his military standing. Only Pedro Crespo sees it for what it is - something that comes from within, a matter of conscience, not of reputation or title.

While some of the elements in *The Mayor of Zalamea* connected with the honour code might puzzle the English audience, there is a great deal which is familiar. The alternating comic and serious scenes, the stock character of the *gracioso* (here a kind of Malvolio with an imperious, servant) the drunken soldierly

in the *Henry IV* plays: none of this is surprising to us. It is clear that the Spanish plays of the Golden Age, in many respects resembling their English counterparts, and originally staged in much the same way, could be excellently presented here. Michael Bogdanov's production of *The Mayor of Zalamea* shows us what can be done. He has a splendid sense of the physical movement implied by the text, and his bare stage and minimum props concentrate the attention on the action - the essence of the Spanish *comedia*.

Adrian Mitchell has written what he calls a "version" of Calderon's text for this production. He has, in fact, kept fairly close to the original. His use of occasional rhyming couplets jars, however, and serves no real purpose. This is a minor complaint compared with the misplacement of linguistic register which he sometimes gives us. There are anachronisms - the "caducuo y cansado" (tired and decrepit) Crespo becomes "mesolitic"; odd idioms - "preñada" (pregnant) becomes "in the stick"; and above all breaks with decorum - Calderon's Captain would not and need not say "I'm not a shit". There is on both the director's and the translator's part a certain amount of playing for laughs which intrudes into the serious business of the play. Don Mendoza's servant Nudo somersaults and is knocked down too often. Don Alvaro is not initially a credible enough rapist: Daniel Massey plays the part superbly on the whole, but seems almost a suave, David Niven-like figure when we first see him, as if not to be taken seriously. Rebollo and his mistress Chispa (who sounds pretty genteel although she says she isn't), instead of merely disappearing at the end of the play, intrude some of their earlier ribaldry into what is a serious moment. One further distracting innovation is the shadowy enactment of Isabel's violation, as she recounts the event to her father.

The star of Calderon's play is undoubtedly Pedro Crespo. It would be hard to imagine the part better acted than it is by Michael Bryant. He plays the noble Castilian peasant, confident of his own personal worth, with just the right dry, ironic tone and stubborn stance.

The reproductive system

By Edwin Morgan

Seeing Is Not Believing
National Gallery of Scotland,
Edinburgh

This fascinating and instructive exhibition is devoted to reminding us that all is not what it seems in art-gallery and auction-room, and if it is entertaining in lifting the lid a little on a world of forgery, gullibility and greed, it also suggests some searching and perhaps unanswerable questions about the nature of an individual work of art and the fallibility of our reactions to it.

The exhibits are arranged to bring out the characteristics of two main troublesome categories: (1) copies and fakes, and (2) mutilations, repainting, and restorations. Copying, of course, need in itself have nothing fraudulent about it, and even the greatest artists have not scorned to make copies of works by admired predecessors when they were starting out as students or apprentices. Or a painter may make a copy of one of his own paintings, as in the fine example here of Raeburn's two portraits of Mrs Kennedy: each very slightly different, but clearly the same sitter and the same pose, and each equally good. The fact that painters do make such copies of their own works invites fraudulent copying by others, and although many of the examples here are obviously inferior, whether in quality of brush-strokes or in sharpness of colour, it must be remembered that normally such a direct comparison with the original would not be easy or possible, a difficulty the forger relies on.

Even so, the copy here of Botticelli's "Portrait of a Youth" is uncannily well painted and convincing, and it is only the careless painting of the background which acts as a giveaway. But the problems multiply when the forgery is not of an actual painting but of an artist's general style. It is easy to be wise after the event; the van Meegeren Vermeers actually seemed to be more crude after one knew they were fakes; nevertheless, experts were deceived. (Now that there are van Meegeren collectors, presumably there are van Meegeren forgeries around too.) The exhibition shows two pictures of laughing children which were widely accepted as being by Franz Hals until the 1930s, though they were probably painted about 1880. Also included is a Boudin, "Shipping in Antwerp Harbour", where the catalogue will not commit itself to saying whether this is a copper-bottomed forgery or merely an off-day production by the man himself. If it is a fake, it is a contemporary fake, so scientific tests will not help, and we have to fall back on the eye. Yet the eye, poor organ, steeped in connoisseurship as it may be, cannot quite swear one way or the other.

And what does the eye do, confronted with a large and apparently well-composed picture like Tiepolo's "The Finding of Moses", from which in fact a sizable section, containing a solitary and very striking figure, has been hacked off at the right hand side? Or, to take an opposite case, how can the eye accept, without any great discomfort or sense of strangeness or absurdity, Quentin Massys's "Portrait of a Man" which has had new objects expertly painted into it at different times, three and even four centuries later, in a mad but exquisite grangerizing the reasons for which are impossible to guess? The eye, too, must surely be shaken by the sheer extent of careful and successful deception in the exhibition: lights in revealing - a festering corpse simply painted out as too ugly, a short-tunicked and rather camp figure as a convincing long skirt, a man brandishing an anachronistic jawbone, overpainted to make him mildly raise a wine-glass? In all these

cases we now know what the original was like; but in how many others are we still in happy ignorance?

It would be comforting if we could think that literary connoisseurs are in not quite such a state of disarray. Certainly attributions and datings can tease, even after computer analysis, and writers from Shakespeare downwards are no strangers to plagiarism; yet there is surely an important sense in which a painting or sculpture differs from a poem or novel: the former can be copied, the latter not. The only near equivalent would be one of Apollinaire's hand-drawn *Calligrammes*, or a three-dimensional concrete poem by Ian Hamilton Finlay, or possibly (though less persuasively) an illuminated page by Blake, and these are examples only because they partly usurp the territory of art. In the sense in which a work of art - the "Mona Lisa", the "Burghers of Calais" - exists, a poem and a novel

do not exist, and what does not exist cannot be copied, either lovingly or criminally.

In that witty story by Borges, "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote", the twentieth-century Menard "never contemplated a mechanical transcription of the original; he did not propose to copy it", but in attempting to recreate it he found he was writing it down word for word - still without producing a "copy", since what it meant to Cervantes could never be the same as what it meant to him, or Borges, or us. The absurdity of writing out an exact copy of *Don Quixote* has no answering absurdity in the world of art. No matter how carefully a painting is copied, whether by human or by mechanical means, the physical existence of the original guards a status that has no literary equivalent, and this is reflected in the fact that we accept *Don Quixote*'s multiple availability in Penguin Classics with-

out the misgivings we feel about Athena reproductions of van Gogh's *Sunflowers*. This is not, or not necessarily, snobbery, but rather a recognition of the uniqueness of the work of plastic art. What *Hamlet* is, or *Paradise Lost*, no one knows; they reach their approximate, contingent definitions only when performed or read, and quickly vanish again. But the non-existence of a literary work of art is not a disadvantage. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* and *Dogg's Hamlet* cannot destroy *Hamlet* in the way that a cut-up painting or a dispersed triptych destroys its original. The glory of painting is its vulnerability, the glory of literature is its invulnerability. Art is always being forged, because it is worth forging; literature is rarely forged, because it is a kind of forgery already, back to Homer and beyond, "the hoax that joke bilked" as Joyce called it. Neither, it seems, is better than the other.

Treasure island

By J. B. Donne

Festival of Sri Lanka
Commonwealth Institute

In Western eyes, Ceylon is an extension of India, an island outpost of the Indian sub-continent. But to the Sinhalese, despite their undoubted Aryan origins and their reversion to the old Indian name for their country, Sri Lanka is an integral part of South-East Asia, and also the centre of world Buddhism. As the upholder of the old Theravada School of Buddhism, it has close religious links with Burma, Thailand and Kampuchea and through sea-trade and later Dutch colonialism long-standing cultural and historical ties with Indonesia. But since Independence in 1948 and Ceylon's prominence in international affairs as a non-aligned country, tourism has increased enormously, and its Buddhist and secular monuments are becoming as well known world-wide as the pyramids of Egypt, with which they can be compared for sheer physical vastness.

Today, hippies gather outside the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy, most of them unaware that the doors are opened each evening so that one may enter and pay one's respects by offering flowers before the Holy Relic. The three huge Buddha figures carved in the granite outcrop of the Gal Vihara appear as tourist pot-boilers, representing the Parivrajana, the passing away of the Buddha, lying on his right side on his death-couch, a scene as essential in the religions of the world as the Crucifixion, and as often depicted in the greatest works of Oriental art. Less widely known is the holiest site of all, that of the sacred Bo-tree, descended from the very Bodhi-Tree under which the Buddha sought enlightenment in Northern India over 2,500 years ago. A cutting was brought to Anuradhapura in the third century BC and has flourished ever since, thus becoming the oldest historical tree known.

But many of these sites and monuments, particularly temples and stupas, now urgently need restoration and conservation. A colossal five-year plan has already been set up jointly by UNESCO and Sri Lanka to carry out archaeological work on what they have called the Cultural Triangle, formed by the three royal cities and religious centres of Anuradhapura (fourth century BC to eleventh century AD), Polonnaruwa (eleventh-thirteenth centuries AD) and Kandy (fifteenth century to 1815). The scale of these operations is considerably greater than that for the raising of the Temple of Abu Simbel, since at least six different

sites are involved this time. The cost will be great, too - some thirteen million pounds at present estimates.

The main purpose of the Festival of Sri Lanka has been to publicize and promote this scheme, which it has been doing through a number of seminars and an exhibition of art and antiquities (continuing until September 13) that have never been seen before. The most beautiful of these is undoubtedly the eighth-century bronze gilt image of a Bodhisattva sitting in the attitude of ease with the left leg dangling, the tips of the thumb and forefinger of the right hand joined in the teaching *mudra*. The naturalness of the pose, with the left shoulder raised to counter-balance the raised right leg, and the realistic representation of the body, particularly the abdominal musculature, combine with the dignity and repose of the face to express a sense of deep meditation and peace. In contrast is the large bronze image of the Hindu deity Siva as Nataraja, the animated Lord of the Cosmic Dance, with an aureole of flames around him, dancing on one leg on the personification of evil and ignorance. In one of his four waving hands he holds the drum whose sound causes the cosmic creation. The sheer technical ability displayed - the figure alone is over three feet high - reveals the advanced level of bronze-casting achieved in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. One of the smallest and yet the most sacred items in the exhibition is a gold reliquary in the form of a stupa, just over one and a half inches across, surmounted by a royal umbrella. This was found in the stupa near Anuradhapura which contains the ashes of Mahinda, who brought Buddhism to the island in the third century BC.

But many other aspects of Sri Lankan art, life and society are being displayed at the Commonwealth Institute. There are performances of Sri Lankan plays, films and dances and daily demonstrations of various traditional crafts, including weaving, wood-carving, batik and silversmithing. In the theatre foyer one can sample a variety of delicate Sri Lankan dishes, so different from the carries one is accustomed to here, for they are mainly prepared with coconut, milk and coconut cream, and served with very hot sambals; a kind of chutney originating in Indonesia and introduced to Sri Lanka by the Dutch in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A display of modern Sri Lankan art is unfortunately too small to exemplify the range and depth of the individual artists. One misses the last echings of the late Ranil Perera Jayasinghe, but George Keyt, the doyen of twentieth-century South-East Asian painting, is well represented by some of his smaller canvases. Finally, the Lake House Bookshop has put on a large

display at the Institute of Sri Lankan publications which are normally unobtainable in this country and are being sold at bargain prices.

However, nearly every book or exhibition concerned with Sri Lanka - art, history or culture suffers as this display does one serious drawback - they omit almost without exception the colonial era, from the arrival of the first Portuguese in 1505 to the achievement of Independence in 1948. During this period, Ceylon (the island has had so many names, Lanka, Taprobane, Serendib, and the Portuguese called it Zeylan) was partially or totally governed by the Portuguese, Dutch and British in turn for about one and a half centuries each. Cultural exchanges were many and mutual. For example, the Portuguese adopted spiral turning from the East and the resulting influence of the fact to express a sense of deep meditation and peace. In contrast is the large bronze image of the Hindu deity Siva as Nataraja, the animated Lord of the Cosmic Dance, with an aureole of flames around him, dancing on one leg on the personification of evil and ignorance. In one of his four waving hands he holds the drum whose sound causes the cosmic creation. The sheer technical ability displayed - the figure alone is over three feet high - reveals the advanced level of bronze-casting achieved in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. One of the smallest and yet the most sacred items in the exhibition is a gold reliquary in the form of a stupa, just over one and a half inches across, surmounted by a royal umbrella. This was found in the stupa near Anuradhapura which contains the ashes of Mahinda, who brought Buddhism to the island in the third century BC.

At the same time the traditional arts, practices and beliefs of the people were maintained and indeed survive today. There are still performances of the masked kolum dances and the masked healing rites of the south of the island, short, water-drenched extracts of which are specially put on in the tourist centres for foreigners. Some of these masks in museum and private collections can be dated back to the middle of the last century. The folk goddess Pattini is still worshipped by thousands every year, and dances are still performed at all-night ceremonies in the fields, beseeching her blessing for the fertility of the crops. It is surely this traditional way of life and culture as much as the magnificence of the archaeological monuments that has attracted Arthur C. Clarke, who is to give two illustrated talks at the Commonwealth Institute (on September 7 and 9 at 7.30 pm), to become the most famous foreign resident of Ceylon, Sri Lanka.

"The Influence of Tuberculosis on the Work of Visual Artists" and "Colour as Sensation in Visual Art and in Science" are two articles from a recent issue of *Leonardo*, the "International Journal of Contemporary Visual Artists", now in its thirteenth year. Subscription details for the magazine, which has a special interest in the relation between art, science and technology, are available from Pergamon Press, Headington Hill Hall, Oxford OX3 0 BW.

New Oxford Books:
HistoryOld Friends,
New Enemies

The Royal Navy and
the Imperial Japanese
Navy. Strategic Illusions,
1936-1941
Arthur Marder

From its establishment in 1868 the Imperial Japanese Navy had been closely modelled on the Royal Navy. Professor Marder examines the gradual erosion of this association, compares and contrasts the strength and weaknesses of the opposing navies as Britain and Japan prepared for war, and gives a fresh interpretation of the story of Force Z, which culminated in the sinking of the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse* on 10 December 1941. Illustrated £19.50 27 August

The Tools
of Empire

Technology and European
Imperialism in the
Nineteenth Century
Daniel R. Headrick

This book concerns the technological means used by Europeans - particularly the British - in the nineteenth century to penetrate, conquer, develop, and exploit their colonies in Asia and Africa. The author contends that the technological aspect of European imperialism has been largely ignored by historians. £10.50 paper covers £4.95

The Philosophy
of the American
Revolution

Morton White

This book shows how the Founding Fathers understood such philosophical ideas as liberty, self-evident truth, natural law, and inalienable rights. The author notes that the fathers acknowledged their failure to invent any new philosophical ideas, and admitted dependence on the views of earlier philosophers and jurists from Aristotle to Locke. Paper covers £3.95 Galaxy Books 27 August

The Legacy
of Greece

M. I. Finley

This is not a revision of the old *Legacy of Greece*, published in 1921, but a completely new book, with new contributions and a different approach. The chapters inevitably consist to some extent, as in the earlier volume, of surveys of the different areas of Greek culture, but that element has been reduced and more attention is given to what later ages have made of their inheritance from the Greeks. £8.85

The Fasti
of Roman Britain

Anthony R. Birley

This book describes and analyses the careers of nearly two hundred Romans who served in Britain either in the administration or in the army. It deals not merely with their activities in Britain but to their background and service elsewhere, and thus contributes to our knowledge of the social history of the Roman Empire as well as to the history of Roman Britain. £30

Oxford
University Press

The Stratford World Shakespeare Congress

By Stanley Wells

During the first week of August, close on 700 scholars from some thirty nations descended upon Stratford-upon-Avon to confer about "Shakespeare: Min of the Theatre". The International Shakespeare Association held its first official congress in Washington five years ago, though many members clearly felt that the Vancouver congress of 1971, from which the Association sprang, was its first meeting in fact if not in name. In Washington the congress was merged with the annual gathering of the Shakespeare Association of America, which this year again joined forces with the International Association, bringing over 300 of its members together outside the American continent for the first time. Under the expectation that Stratford would, as usual, be offering four Shakespeare plays at this time of year, the congress was moved from April to August, but the success of *Nicholas Nickleby* has disrupted the season, and from this point of view, at least, the meeting might as well have taken place at the usual time.

Beyond convivialities, the opening event was an impressive service of morning prayer, with the litany and ante-communion, based on the Elizabethan prayer book of 1559, and held in the church where Shakespeare himself must have gained his familiarity with the Bible, the prayer book, and the homilies. The volatile preacher, W. Moelwyn Merchant, is one of the few Shakespeare scholars in Holy Orders. A playwright of today gave the inaugural lecture, John Mortimer speaking beguilingly of his boyhood enthusiasm for Shakespeare: his unquestioning assumption that a dramatist naturally starts from an idea and then seeks a story and characters to embody it may well have heartened academics whose fellows have castigated them for supposing that Shakespeare worked like this.

On the warm Sunday evening, delegates packed the Theatre for a recital, *William: the Conqueror*, devised by Roger Pringle, which allowed them to see their President, Sir John Gielgud, in action, elegantly supported by Richard Pasco, Robert Spencer. It was worth coming from Moscow, Melbourne, Minnesota, or Münster to hear Sir John once again perfectly fusing sound and meaning as Hamlet, Richard II, and Lear. To see him as Justice Shallow, chucking with a survivor's glee over "how many of my old acquaintances are dead", gave an increased sense of Shakespeare's range as well as of the actor's.

After the preliminaries, the scholarly business. Each morning from Monday to Thursday a series of lectures, short papers and discussions, given in tandem, so no one could hear them all. British and American speakers predominated. Bernard Beckerman, incoming President of the American association, incisively propounded a theory of "Historic and Iconic Time in Late Tudor Drama". Anne Barton received general admiration for her discussion of Shakespeare's belated influence on Ben Jonson, a view which must lead to a revaluation of Jonson's later plays. Benedict Nightingale splintered up many varied theatrical manifestations of the ghost of Hamlet's father: Inge-Stina Ewbank effortlessly demonstrated that *A Doll's House*, available to conference members in Adrian Noble's brilliant production, can serve to illuminate Shakespeare's verbal mastery.

In the afternoons, a series of workshops, and of twenty-four seminars, encouraging active participation by most of the enrolled members. Trevor Nunn, John Barton, and other members of the RSC gave generously and helpfully of their time and talents. A seminar on "Shakespeare on the Socialist Stage" attracted East European delegates. One on translation numbered representatives of eleven nations in its

thirteen participants. Film and television versions were deliberated. The current productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Winter's Tale* received their share of attention. A discussion of feminist critical approaches – twelve women and three men were participating – is alleged to have occupied twice its allocated time-span before adjournment to less formal surroundings. Evenings were occupied mainly by visits to the Theatre and The Other Place.

And all the time, fringe events: a visit to Warwick Castle, and to Coventry to see the Mystery plays; a poetry reading; exhibitions; video tapes of television productions; meetings of editorial boards and administrative committees, invitations to lecture, to review books, to present articles. And, perhaps as important as anything else, the forming and renewing of professional and personal contacts, matching of faces to well-known names, introductions to senior scholars of younger ones who will occupy their places a generation or two hence.

In the closing plenary session, G. E. Bentley brought us firmly back to the image of Shakespeare as a dramatist of his own time, concerned with the presentation of his plays in the theatre, not at all with their preservation for posterity. If the conference did not pluck out the heart of Shakespeare's mystery, at any rate its delegates had the satisfaction, at the final feast, of literally dismembering and devouring him, in chocolate effigy.

Christopher Logue's "Examinations Every Night", reminiscences of his acting debut in last year's Royal Court *Hamlet*, is one of the essays in a special "Verse Drama Double Issue" of the magazine *Agenda* (available at £3 or \$9 from 5 Cranbourne Court, Albert Bridge Road, London: SW11 4PE). Other essays include A. D. Moody on T. S. Eliot, Richard Jacobs on Beckett, John Heath-Stubbs on Ibsen, John Gurney on Christopher Fry and James Morwood on Stoppard. In addition there are plays in verse by Peter Dale and John Gurney, and reviews by Michael Alexander, Dennis O'Driscoll and others.

DAVID BAIN is the author of *Actors and Audience: A Study of Asides and Related Conventions in Greek Drama*, 1977.

ALAN BOLD is currently completing a book on twentieth-century Scottish literature and a critical study of Hugh MacDiarmid.

ANNE BORN's translation of Karen Blixen's *Letters from Africa*, which was published in America earlier this year, will appear in this country in September.

LORD BRIGGS is Provost of Worcester College, Oxford. His books include *Victorian Cities*, 1963.

JAMES CAMPBELL is editor of the *New Edinburgh Review*.

SUSAN CAMPBELL is the editor of the *Guide to Good Food Shops*.

RICHARD COBB is Professor of Modern History at the University of Oxford. His recent books include *Death in Paris 1793-1801*, 1978, and *Promised Land*, 1979.

NIGEL CROSS is writing a book on the conditions of nineteenth-century authorship.

MASIMO D'AMICO is lecturer in English at Rome University.

O. W. DUMBLEY's books include *Plants and Archaeology*, 1980.

J. E. DOWNS is the translator of Gogol's *Nos Noa*, 1980.

DENNIS DUNCANSON is Reader in South-East Asian Studies at the University of Kent.

DOUGLAS DINN's new collection of poems, *St. Kilda's Parliament*, will be published in September.

to the editor

J. K. Galbraith

Sir, – Professor Skidelsky's elegant review of J. K. Galbraith's book *Keeping up Greek* (August 7), Richard Jenkyns asks rhetorically "who... can forget the terse incantatory lyricism of the verses teaching the use of prepositions?... 'Palom, cum, and ex and e'." I fear that the answer is, Mr Jenkyns himself, for the line normally reads "Palom, clam, cum, ex, and e". In this pedantic vein, I shall add that the joke about *quippe qui* and *upote qui* is first found in *Some Oxford Translations* (1949), p. xxx, where T. F. Higham backdates it to 1912; and that *Charities* is so spelled.

Keeping up Greek

J. H. C. LEACH.
Pembroke College, Oxford.

Milton's Library

Sir, – May I resume a correspondence started in your columns on October 24, 1936, and continued on December 19 of the same year concerning a volume in the library of the General Theological Seminary in New York City?

In the first letter Mr. K. W. Cameron drew attention to a volume of eleven Civil War tracts which, he concluded on the basis of an alphabetical tabulation still visible on several of the title-pages, once contained two additional tracts at the beginning and possibly another at the end. He noticed that someone in the seventeenth century had written "J. . . . Milton gent." on the title-page of one of the undated tracts, *The Plot Discovered*, otherwise unidentified, and thought the name had been inserted by John Milton, an identification which Mr. M. Kelley did not corroborate in the second letter.

I should like to add a postscript to this correspondence. I recently came across an entry on the last page of a catalogue of the library of Sir Edward Dering, Bart. (1598–1644) in the Folger Shakespeare Library which reads:

Mr Milton: the plot discovered.
London. 1640

Among this week's contributors

GEORGE EWART EVANS's books include *The Farm and the Village*, 1969, and *The Days That We Have Seen*, 1975.

JOHN FOGGLES is Honorary Secretary of the Friends of The National Libraries.

P. N. FURKMAN's books include *E. M. Forster: A Life*, 1976-8. He is currently at work on a new book, *The Concept of Social Class*.

ANTONIA GRANDBEN's books include *Historical Writings in England c.1307*, 1974.

PETER GREENHAM is Keeper of the Royal Academy Schools, and author of *Velasquez*, 1969.

RICHARD GREFFITHS's books include *Marshall Pilsen*, 1970.

MICHAEL HAYDEN is the author of *Estate Villages*, 1967.

RONALD J. HILL is the author of *Soviet Politics, Political Science and Reform*, 1980.

PETER HOWELL is the author of *A Commentary on Book One of the Epigrams*, 1980.

JAMES HUNTER is the author of *The Making of the Crofting Community*, 1976.

JOHN LUCAS is the editor of *The 1930s: a Challenge to Orthodoxy*, 1979. His *The Literature of Change* was published earlier this year.

COLIN MACLEOD's commentary on *Colin XXIV* will be published next spring.

KENNETH MELLANBY's most recent book, *Farming and Wildlife*, is reviewed in this issue.

EDWIN MORGAN is Emeritus Professor of English at the University of Glasgow.

ANDREW MOTTON's new long poem, *Independence*, will be published next month.

S. S. PRAWER's books include *Comparative Literary Studies: An Introduction*, 1973, and *Caligari's Children: The Film as Tale of Terror*, 1980.

ANTHONY QUINTON's recent books include *Thoughts and Thinkers* and *Francis Bacon*, both 1980.

SIR JAMES RICHARDS was editor of *The Architectural Review* from 1937-1971.

JOHN ROBINSON is the author of *The Wyatts: An Architectural Dynasty*, 1980.

DAVID SNOW's books include *A Study of Blackbirds*, 1958, and *The Web of Adaptation*, 1976.

ANNE STEVENSON's most recent collection of poems is *Enough of Green*, 1977.

J. B. TRAPP edited *The Apology of St Thomas More*, 1979.

DAVID WALKER is the author, with Andor Gomme, of *The Architecture of Glasgow*, 1968.

JOHN WEIGHTMAN is the author of *The Concept of the Avant-Garde: Explorations in Modernism*, 1973.

STANLEY WELLS is General Editor of the Oxford Shakespeare.

PETER WILLIOTT is the co-author with Charles Madge, of *Inner City Poverty in Paris and London*, which is published this week.

It is one of fourteen works bound together with the call number 49.21, which cost Sir Edward seven shillings. All the tracts with the exception of the one by "Mr Milton" and two others, one without a date and the other published in 1612, were printed in 1641. I was curious about the identity of the "Mr Milton" and, on looking at the literature, was led to the letters published in your columns. The list of tracts in the volume belonging to the General Theological Seminary, printed in the first letter of October 24, 1936, corresponds, item for item, to the list recorded as being in Sir Edward's library with three exceptions. Sir Edward's list includes two extra tracts at the beginning and one at the end. Besides, as one of our Readers, Mr J. Rosenblatt, was able to tell from looking at the copy of *The Plot Discovered* at the General Theological Seminary, it was Sir Edward who added "p. . . . Milton gent."

This tract, published without author or date and generally dated [September] 1641 on the basis of the Thomson catalogue entry, is entitled *The Plot Discovered and Contemplated Commended in a Letter to a private Friend, from a true-hearted well-wisher to great Britain's happiness* (London: Printed for Thomas Underhill, and are to be sold at the Bible in Wood-Street).

Sir Edward Dering was in a good position to know who the author might be. He was a member of the Long Parliament and, from November 1640 until he was disabled to sit as a member in February 1642, was chairman first of the Sub-Committee, then of the Committee on Religion, one of whose charges was "to examine abuse in books, in licensing, in printing, in forbidding them" (*Proceedings principally in the Committee of Religion called in 1640*, ed. by the Rev. L. B. Larking [London: Printed for the Camden Society, 1862, p. 80]). Moreover, on page 3 of *The Plot Discovered* the author names eight people to whom the recipient may show the letter "if it find favour in your eyes." "Sir Edward Dering" heads the list.

There remains a slight mystery as to the actual extent of Sir Edward's knowledge of contemporary publications. The second tract mentioned in Sir Edward's catalogue as being in the volume containing *The Plot Discovered* is by John Milton and yet is entered under the title only – "Animadversions upon the Remonstrance defence against Smectynmaus – London. 1641". However, on another page in the catalogue, written by Sir Edward himself, is the entry "A modest confutation of a scurrilous libel entitled Animadversions upon the Defence against Smectynmaus, p. Mr Mylton ut dicuntur . . . 1642".

The latest book entered in the catalogue is dated 1642: Sir Edward himself was caught up in the turmoil of the Civil War and died in June 1644. Is it possible that the date 1640 (which would include the first three months of 1641) and the attribution of *The Plot Discovered* to John Milton (1608–1674) may be correct?

The outline biographies of the main characters, as set out in an indispensable appendix, should be compared with the more significant and sometimes devastating biographical details given in the text. Moreover, while the text accumulates rich detail chapter by chapter, it is shot through also with pithy generalizations, so that if the effect of the story itself is depressing, the treatment is in many places exciting. Walter seldom misses a memorable phrase, however unpleasant. If Liverpool was rough, Bootle, "where the bugs were clog", was rougher still. *The Protestant Standard* claimed in 1905, we are told, that the Wislote rowdies were "no more Christians than the dogs that run in the streets". The post-1945 high-rise buildings are known as "Mersey Mountains": needless to say "Mersey" in one of them is not most people's concept of an ideal home.

Many of Walter's statements will bear future quotation. "It seemed appropriate that it was in a Liverpool Street that Matthew Arnold [not given a place in the index] collapsed and died in 1888".

In 1979, in a lively but tantalizingly brief study of nineteenth-century Liverpool and the novelists who wrote about it, Ian Sellers suggested that historians of urban literature

Horace Walpole

Sir, – Colonel Crowder's letter (July 3), aimed at voicing a specifically British opinion of the many excellences of the late Wilmarth Sheldon Lewis's editorial work, appears to have stirred up some inappropriate controversy. Nigel Aston's letter (August 7) with its demand for a paperbacked selection of the existence of Lewis's work, is a demand for a paperback edition now before me.

PETER WILLIOTT is the co-author with Charles Madge, of *Inner City Poverty in Paris and London*, which is published this week.

ALAN BELL.
18 Ann Street, Edinburgh EH4 1PJ.

The mongrel of Merseyside

By Asa Briggs

P. J. WALLER:

Democracy and Sectarianism
A political and social history of Liverpool 1868-1939
556pp. Liverpool University Press.
£24.50
0 85323 074 9

Charles Dickens was one of the few visitors to nineteenth-century Liverpool who left it for London "with a certain feeling of depression". Yet even visitors who disliked its sharp social contrasts were struck by its excitements. Thus, Nathaniel Hawthorne, who served as American Consul there in the 1850s and who never walked through its crowded working-class streets without feeling, in his own words, "as if I should catch some disease", was not alone in enjoying its "bustle" and the sense of being "in the midst of life".

Many twentieth-century visitors both before and since the Beatles have shared such contrasting sensations. The contrast, indeed, is that of the social scenes of Liverpool itself, reflecting, it was once said, "the insolence of riches" on the one hand and abject poverty on the other. J. B. Priestley, however, in the course of his "English journey", decided after a busy day there in the 1930s that "somebody else must give a plain fair account of this great city: the task in the time was beyond me". So instead "I bought myself a good cigar".

Historians also have usually shied away from this great mercantile city, drawing quick contrasts of their own with industrial Manchester or traditionalist Bristol. Now at last, after he confesses, rather more than one cigarette, Philip Waller has set out to give an account of the politics of the city from 1868 to 1939; he even adds a brief and sketchy epilogue about Liverpool between 1945 and 1980. If, because of its more narrowly defined scope, the book does not quite meet Priestley's commission at every point, it successfully relates Liverpool politics – often raw politics – to Liverpool society. This was always a society with problems, even as early as 1795 when Liverpool was described as "large, irregular, busy, opulent and corrupted". Moreover, Mr Waller never papers over any cracks: there is nothing "official" about either his account or his conclusions.

The Liverpool politics which he presents are very different, therefore, from the Liverpool politics of earlier histories. Some of the leaders amongst them are, in his carefully chosen phrase, "flawed personalities": others are *poseurs*. It is not always easy to judge whether they made the city or the city made them. For such reasons it is advisable to supplement Waller's narrative from other sources (which he himself does not assess in his bibliography), such as Brian White's *A History of the Corporation of Liverpool, 1835-1914*, which appeared, also under the imprint of the Liverpool University Press, thirty years ago, or Mrs Simey's admirable *Charitable Effort in Liverpool in the Nineteenth Century*. Waller himself recognizes – or half recognizes – the difficulty: "Much local history does not have advantages of ready manageability and circumscription"; yet he does not try to overcome it.

Four clear themes emerge, nonetheless, from what is undoubtedly a pioneering study, and one without a rival. First, it examines with penetration religious friction and sectarian strife in Liverpool. "God seemed very far away in Liverpool", Hugh Walpole once wrote, but if this was true it was certainly not because either clergymen or politicians were remote in invoking His presence. Sermons could turn into calls not for compassion but for angry action, revivals into riots. While mentioned, Wile only once: Waller has many pages about him (and the size and influence of his Bible class). He also goes back (necessarily) to McNeill, and

avoided Liverpool because it "stood out as a mongrel among towns, a hybrid of races and tongues, a fearsome, strife-torn, money-grasping, land-gobbling excrescence, incomprehensible to outsiders". Now, as an insider/outsider historian, Waller moves easily in and out of the city, using national as well as local sources, though for the most part tracing processes rather than analysing structures. There seems to be a strong sense of continuity in Liverpool running through good and bad times alike, patterns of boredom and drama which can burst out into riot, as it has done again recently. Yet Waller notes a "dislocation" of its earlier history during the 1950s and 1960s.

Even in such a large book as this (with more than 120 pages of footnotes), Waller fails to elucidate completely the politics of the city; too much is left out of the social history – "leisure", in particular – to make it comprehensive. If anything, there is too much surface detail, the significance of which is doubtless always clear to the author but can frequently be puzzling to the reader. Thus, a remarkable periodical like the *Forcible* appears without introduction, while an extraordinary (and alarming) George Wise, "the Protestant crusader and menace to authorities", makes his way into the book through thick undergrowth (appearing on the same page as the future Conservative boss, Archibald Salvidge) and then disappears again until he emerges once more to weave his way through Chapters Twelve to Sixteen. The spotlight shifts from page to page on to various districts like Everton, "an archetypal artisans' suburb", for instance, Toxteth, described in 1975 as "the most unsavoury place in Great Britain", or the Scotland constituency, which despite its name was "as Irish as it is County Tipperary"; their characteristics are noted, but there is no adequate general social topography.

The first chapter on "the character of Liverpool" is an impressionistic profile covering a far longer period of time than the book itself, and it does not serve as an adequate introduction to the rest. Indeed, it is just as easy, thereafter, for the reader to go astray, particularly if he is an outsider, as it is for the visitor to Liverpool to lose himself in its streets. Likewise, the index, though long, is not a perfect guide. Finally, the reader is not helped by Waller's chronological framework, which involves breaking up long periods of time, some of them apparent unities, into short chapters, each of which is introduced by undated quotations from inside and outside the city.

For such reasons it is advisable to supplement Waller's narrative from other sources (which he himself does not assess in his bibliography), such as Brian White's *A History of the Corporation of Liverpool, 1835-1914*, which appeared, also under the imprint of the Liverpool University Press, thirty years ago, or Mrs Simey's admirable *Charitable Effort in Liverpool in the Nineteenth Century*. Waller himself recognizes – or half recognizes – the difficulty: "Much local history does not have advantages of ready manageability and circumscription"; yet he does not try to overcome it.

At the end of the nineteenth century it must have seemed that the railways, as they existed then, were destined to endure unchanged (allowing for technical advances) for a very long time, yet the ensuing decades were to dissipate this sanguine expectation. Much of the railway system in Britain has now disappeared, and this has stimulated a kind of romantic nostalgia, focused upon the steam locomotive, which preservationists are seeking to assuage. But preservation has its limitations, and there are many things that cannot now be recovered or restored; yet it is possible to find out a great deal about the railways of the past.

O. S. Nock, whose reputation as an authority on all aspects of the railway is well established, calls such research "railway archaeology" – the

Working Men's Conservative Association founded in 1868) is particularly well done. For White, Salvidge's association as a machine politician marked "an attempt to get away from the inconvenient necessity of having to stand or fall on a definite practical policy and to rest the Tory majority once more on the secure foundation of immutable prejudice". Waller prefers as a description Theodore Roosevelt's simple maxim, "There are no politics in politics". Later he writes equally simply that "Salvidge placed deals before ideals". The nine pages on the fall and death of Salvidge in 1928 are particularly illuminating. By then J. L. Garvin could call him "one of the biggest men in England", and Derby, who had been fighting against him, admitted that his death left everything "in absolute chaos".

Third, and this is the corollary of the second point, Liberalism was "a creature of stunted growth in Liverpool" and "the Liberals were unable to dictate the movement of Liverpool politics for long". There was a Liberal majority on the Council from 1892 to 1895, the first in fifty years, but at the 1892 General Election the Conservatives held seven of the nine seats. The Liberal administration was unlucky in its timing – economic depression – and already Labour was on the march. Following the 1895 elections the Conservatives increased their membership from 29 to 64, and Derby became Lord Mayor by 82 votes to 11.

Fourth, it was not until the Edwardian years that the Labour Party established a foothold in Liverpool, and even then it found it just as difficult to challenge Conservatism as the Liberal Party had done. Waller's portrait of James Sexton, however, is far more favourable than his portraits of any nineteenth- or twentieth-century local Liberal leader (he barely touches on the recent Liberal revival in Liverpool), its personalities in 1906 (Sexton's party won six seats and the Liberals two). Not until the Liberal Party had given way to Labour, and even then not until 1945 (with a swing well below the national average), were the Conservatives reduced to as few as three out of what were by then eleven Liverpool seats. (Scotland was one of only three constituencies in the country which returned a Labour candidate unopposed).

Waller includes a good chapter on industrial strife between 1911 and 1914, although he deals rather too sketchily with the position of Labour dockers from whose ranks he came – very different from a factory-based working class – were not always "true to my Labour standard". He lived long enough to see a tacit (sometimes open) defensive understanding between Conservatives and Liberals to keep Labour out.

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Impermanent ways

By Sherwin Bailey

O. S. NOCK:

Railway Archaeology
192pp. Cambridge: Patrick Stephens.
£8.95
0 85059 451 0

At the end of the nineteenth century it must have seemed that the railways, as they existed then, were destined to endure unchanged (allowing for technical advances) for a very long time, yet the ensuing decades were to dissipate this sanguine expectation. Much of the railway system in Britain has now disappeared, and this has stimulated a kind of romantic nostalgia, focused upon the steam locomotive, which preservationists are seeking to assuage. But preservation has its limitations, and there are many things that cannot now be recovered or restored; yet it is possible to find out a great deal about the railways of the past.

O. S. Nock, whose reputation as an authority on all aspects of the railway is well established, calls such research "railway archaeology" – the

discovery and understanding of everything connected with the railways that have now vanished, by means of the study of such evidence as remains. His book, based on exceptionally wide knowledge and experience, is intended as a guide to that evidence.

He begins with early forms of permanent way and with the first attempts to convert stationary steam engines into locomotives. He then gives examples of the way the railway network evolved; and a fascinating chapter follows in which he shows how abandoned lines can be traced with the aid of Ordnance Survey maps – a branch of railway archaeology that can be pursued even by those who cannot explore the actual sites. Changes in station layout are discussed, exemplified by Euston in particular. Some of the classic and historic structures – viaducts, bridges and buildings – which have vanished are reviewed, and some notable structures which have so far survived are recorded, such as the Glenfarnham and Ribblesdale viaducts. There is an excellent survey of early signal-boxes and signalling, including interlocking lever-frames. The text is elucidated by clear and apposite illustrations,

maps, and diagrams. With so large a field to be covered, some omissions were inevitable. The smaller station buildings receive no attention; and such aids to railway archaeological studies, (particularly with Ordnance Survey maps) as working timetables, and the invaluable appendices to the working timetables deserved mention; the appendices in particular contain much that illuminates the past. Railway rule-books also throw light upon methods and conditions of working. More could have been said about the standard signal-boxes of the pre-grouping companies, and the instruments they contained, and about the value of signal-box diagrams in archaeological study. It would have been useful had a bibliography or guide to further study been provided, and also a list of associations, such as the Signalling Record Society, which exist to promote the archaeological study of various aspects of the railways.

Nevertheless, Mr Nock's book, attractively written and produced, should stimulate interest in railway archaeology both among railway enthusiasts and all who enjoy investigating the past.

There are omissions from this book. We learn little of the relationship between councillors and officials, so that it is impossible to test the validity in Liverpool of theories concerning that relationship recently worked out in relation to Leeds. It is only in the last paragraph that the point is made that "the tradition of a participatory, amateur democracy has been maintained, although the conviction that local government is too serious a matter to be left to the elected councillors has gained". There is a brief note earlier on the electoral system, but we learn little of the extent of popular participation, nor is there much about levels of local rates or modes of rating. Clearly the kind of conservatism which some nineteenth-century Liverpool Conservatives advocated not only cost more money than doctrinaire Liberals were prepared to spend, but more than many Conservative ratepayers were keen to pay. Occasionally ratepayer candidates, like independent Protestants, took the stage, but like rats, they do not figure as a category in the index. The attitude of the Labour Party towards spending is also left vague.

Waller clearly prefers words to statistics although, having begun his chapter on "the character of Liverpool", he ends with statistics and with a telling generalization: "In April 1974 the new metropolitan County Council of Merseyside was born, governing over 1½ million people in one area of 250 square miles. Where once it was very hard to define Merseyside, now it was hard to distinguish Liverpool".

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Unnatural hazards

By David Snow

KENNETH MELLANBY:
Farming and Wildlife
178pp. Collins. £9.50.
0 01 21929 X

"It is clear that modern farming is generally harmful to wildlife." With this sentence, amply supported and documented by the preceding chapters, Kenneth Mellanby begins the final chapter of his new book. No body is in a better position to give an authoritative account of the subject than he is. For some forty years he has been professionally involved in agricultural science, conservation, and the impact of farming on wildlife in Britain, and as a keen naturalist living in East Anglia, where modern farming has had the greatest impact, he continues to be deeply concerned though now retired. He was involved in work with DDT during the war, soon after its insecticidal properties were recognized, at a time when "it" seemed to be the perfect chemical. It killed insect pests at dilutions which at that time seemed incredible, yet was practically harmless to man. Later, as Director of the Nature Conservancy's Monks Wood Experimental Station, he was in charge of a team which carried out much excellent research into the wider ecological effects of modern farming.

The message which comes through is largely but not totally depressing for the naturalist. The effects of drainage, improvement of grassland, eradication of hedges, chemical fertilizers, herbicides and other recent developments are described lucidly and fairly, and they are nearly all bad so far as native animals and plants are concerned. Mellanby does not believe that they are necessarily bad in any other way, as some con-

servationists insist, though they may have unfortunate side-effects. He is eminently fair-minded. Of course all this has been said before, but not always so authoritatively. Those who are interested will probably already have read much about it, while those who are not are unlikely to read this book. Inevitably, for the reasonably well-informed naturalist this makes for dullish reading, and for a feeling of depression if there is nothing that he or she can do about it. But for active conservationists the book should be useful, as they need to appreciate the farmer's case. One would like as many farmers as possible to read it, while for agricultural policy-makers it should be required reading.

Dr Mellanby does not expect British farming practice to alter very much in the foreseeable future, except that it will become even more intensive. As a veteran scientific administrator he sees how small gains may be made, to offset the inevitable losses, and how harmful effects may be mitigated by the exercise of care and, where necessary, controls. There is, however, one way in which a major gain could be made for wildlife: we could stop eating so much meat. Mellanby has argued this case elsewhere (*Can Britain Feed Itself?*, 1975), and he does not need to mention it on the last page of this book. We could, it seems, feed ourselves perfectly adequately mainly on cereals, and be self-sufficient, and have land over to use in other ways, including nature conservation. Producing meat is wasteful both of land and of energy. As he says, "The choice is really between two forms of enjoyment - a meat-rich diet or a countryside rich in wildlife." I think that it would have been worth dealing at greater length with this important theme, as readers of this book cannot all be expected to have read the earlier one.

On one point I take issue with

Mellanby, but not with him alone. Discussing the fundamental question, Why should we conserve wildlife? he rightly points out the weakness of the utilitarian or scientific argument, that one should not let species become extinct, if it can be avoided, because one never knows how useful to man they may turn out to be. Unknown plants in the Amazonian forest, which may provide valuable new drugs, are often mentioned. There is very little evidence that this argument is valid for the British flora and fauna, and in any particular case new technological development may demolish it. Instead, Mellanby falls back on the cultural argument: we like wildlife, it is part of our heritage, and without it Britain would be an impoverished country. This is true enough, but the argument is still totally man-centred. The only reason why lions, tigers or giraffes - or marsh harriers in East Anglia - should continue to exist is that they please us, they are part of our cultural heritage. This is the attitude that has been given the horrible name "speciesism", but there is no better word. Surely the forms of life that have evolved over millions of years, just as we have, have a positive right to their existence, quite independent of us, and we must respect that right. Arguments for conservation that ignore this seems to me to be fatally flawed.

Books in Collins's New Naturalist series are always well produced and pleasant to handle and read. This one is no exception. The twenty-four plates of black-and-white photographs are well chosen, all illustrating points of real interest. But at some stages the checking of names seems to have slipped up. Of twenty scientific names of birds in the text, seven contain misspellings - surely too high a proportion. There are other misprints, but I am sure that the important statistics are accurate.

Chemicals in court

By Kenneth Mellanby

THOMAS R. DUNLAP:
DDT
Scientists, Citizens and Public Policy
318pp. Princeton University Press.
£13.10.
0 691 04680 8

Thomas Dunlap is Assistant Professor of History at Virginia State University and his book is a contribution to the social history of science in modern America. His early training was in chemistry, but this has not made him sympathetic to the followers of his former discipline. He believes that public involvement in problems such as the use of pesticides and other toxic chemicals is the best way of preventing environmental destruction, and that science is too important to be left to the scientists.

The main theme of this book is how "the public" decided to ban DDT in America. It contains detailed accounts of two legal battles, the Wisconsin DDT hearing in 1968 and 1969, and the Consolidated DDT hearing of 1971 and 1972. These were gladiatorial combats between lawyers and "environmentalists", and the chemical industry. Dunlap is clearly a committed partisan who repeatedly denigrates scientists who do not agree that DDT presented "the world's worst pollution problem". Those who disagree were appointed to reporting committees, whatever their qualifications and experience, "to give an appearance of neutrality", and any statement based on research merely "repeated the old platitudes".

Although Dunlap is clearly a biased witness, he does give a useful account of the early history of DDT. He records Rachel Carson's main credit for revealing its danger in *Silent Spring*, published in the autumn of 1962, but he shows that many scientists were aware of the possible harmful effects of the chemical soon after it was first used twenty years earlier. I do not claim to have been the first of these, but the record of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine shows that at a discussion of the new wonder insecticide in 1945 I intervened to suggest that more ecological work on its effects was needed before it was widely released. There were many balanced scientific assessments, published from 1945 onwards, and DDT was often used sensibly with little damage to the environment. Reasonable controls were sometimes introduced.

It would be wrong for us in Britain to be complacent, but our record in this field is very different from that of the USA. During the 1950s scientists in government, industry, and amateur naturalists, particularly ornithologists, were making some progress. The British Nature Conservancy set up Monks Wood Experimental Station (not Monks Hole as stated by Dunlap) in 1960 under my direction, with Norman Moore as head of a strong Pesticides and Wild-

life Section. Moore served on the committee which, six months before *Silent Spring* appeared, introduced successful measures to control pesticide use, based largely on ecological observations. Since then there has been continuous discussion between scientists and the industry, and co-operative efforts have allowed sensible pest control with the minimum damage to the environment.

The North American situation was clearly different. This is partly because pests there do more damage than in Britain, and hence provoke stronger reactions. But the sad thing, which this book clearly records, is the polarization of opinions. One reason for this is that the US produces aggressive lawyers like Carol Yannaccone, who devised the motto for the Environmental Defence Fund - "Sue the Bastards". Instead of calm and fruitful scientific discussion legal confrontation results, with attorneys incapable of understanding that one can seldom give a simple "yes" or "no" to an ecological question on the properties of a pesticide.

The violence of public reaction between 1968 and 1972 was all the greater perhaps because it occurred at so late a date, when other countries, including Britain, had largely solved the problem. 1969 was, in the US, the Year of the Environment, when a belated and exaggerated reaction took place among students and others, fuelled unfortunately by a few scientists who should have known better. They were all doom and gloom, one respected professor prophesying that air pollution would make many major cities uninhabitable by 1975, and the sea sterile by 1978. Some defended such overstatements as being necessary to arouse the public; I believe they were entirely harmful, causing both "overkill" measures (like the banning of DDT) and, something which Dunlap admits, a "waning of public enthusiasm in America for environmental issues".

On a world scale the effects of the American ban on DDT have been disastrous, as it has probably led to more deaths than the 1939-45 war. There have been millions of cases of malaria, many fatal, which could have been prevented; and other, more toxic insecticides have been substituted for DDT, resulting in human and animal fatalities. Most insecticides, properly used, do their job (ie, control dangerous pests) with minimum environmental damage.

My major criticism of this book is that the scientific information it contains is so out of date. Little research less than ten years old is included. Since 1970 we have learnt that global contamination by DDT is not rising: levels in fish and birds are falling. We know that DDT is still the most useful existing chemical in many situations, and we know how to use it safely. If, in America, instead of crying "Sue the Bastards" there had been more serious attempts at compromise and to *understand* the dangers of DDT, many Third-World citizens now dead might still be alive.

Down the glen

By Isabel Colegate

AMY STEWART FRASER:
Roses in December
155pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.
£6.95.
0 7100 0823 6

Amy Stewart Fraser, who is in her eighties, has written two books of reminiscences and one about the games and rhymes of her Scottish childhood. *Roses in December* is a random collection of memories, stories, facts and traditions about Glen Cairn, near Balmoral, where she spent her childhood and where she still spends three months of every year. She was a daughter of the manse, and remembers in detail the life of the farmers and drovers in the Glen, which is now, though much frequented by tourists, almost empty

of permanent inhabitants: farm-houses have been deserted and sheep graze where oats and barley used to grow; the manse too is a ruin. She remembers spreading sheets and pillow-cases on the drying-green to bleach in the sun on washing days, taking children to the burn, the songs her mother used to sing - and the many Scotswomen who write traditional songs or were responsible for collecting them. Reminiscences of sheep-gathering and "shepherds' meetings" of gypsies, famous walkers, harvesting, weaving, local characters, mingle with stories of Florence Nightingale impressing Queen Victoria with her grasp of detail and her determination, of Edwin Landseer failing to shoot a stag because he was making a sketch of a famous animal, of a schoolboy, "freak storm", waiting, suffering, from the cold at Balmoral, of a ghostly army marching over the hills, and the spectre known as the Gray Maid of Ben Macduh.

The elevation of Ho

By Dennis Duncanson

ARCHIMEDES L. A. PATTI:
Why Viet Nam?
Prelude to America's Albatross
612pp. University of California Press. £7.75. (paperback, £3.50).
0 520 03672 7

When Japan was prostrated by atom bombs in 1945, Ho Chi Minh, unheard of as yet by his fellow-countrymen, lay in the jungle stricken with malaria and dysentery. Three weeks later he was ensconced in the seat of government at Hanoi as "Mr President" to the abdicating Emperor of Vietnam. This was set Act I Scene I in the longest and most far-reaching drama of the Cold War. At Hanoi to welcome Ho onto the stage stood a representative of the wartime Office of Strategic Services (an analogue of the Special Operations Executive and precursor of the CIA), in the person of Archimedes L.A. Patti; even Ho's recovery from fever was owed to an OSS dispenser.

America's redoubtable commitment to the Communist cause during the "August Revolution" was known about all through the "albatross" years of the Vietnam controversy, but Mr Patti was working as intelligence analyst, or in, the White House and kept silence - until Michael Charlton approached him in 1977 for a BBC interview. By then, Patti had left President Nixon's service, on the eve of Watergate, and so quit the stage before the last scene in the drama whose opening scene he had set.

The Communists who first seized government offices in Hanoi and Saigon in August 1945 were "red guards" not in touch with Ho Chi Minh; but Ho took over from them in a three-stage coup, in every phase of which he was able to show American support. Before the war, he had been a "Moscow eye" at Mao Tse-tung's headquarters, but he moved south in the Red Army and, ten months after the Japanese occupation of Tonkin, in the role of *soyevnik* (adviser) from the Comintern, resuscitated the Indochina Communist Party among Vietnamese émigrés. Taken hostage by a Chiang Kai-shek general, he drew American attention to himself by means he had used when under arrest ten years before in Hong Kong, namely by sending a report to a Chungking newspaper.

Released at the instance of the OSS, Patti implies - in order to mobilize guerrillas among the border tribes, he offered the OSS at Kumm the services of his "all-Indo-Chinese intelligence network" - an offer of breathtaking effrontery in the actual circumstances.

Next, armed with a signed photograph from the "Flying Tiger" Admiral Chennault, a case of revolvers from the OSS, and the goodwill of Patti just arrived from Washington, Ho persuaded the doubting guerrillas to accept into their camps two OSS training teams ("Deer" and "Cat"), with new rifles by the air-dropped, and to "collect intelligence" (unspecified) for Patti. As soon as Tokyo capitulated, he convened a "Party conference" under the banners to adopt slogans for the seizure of power, as well as a "national conference" with the OSS present, to appoint a "provisional government" that could "welcome the arrival of the Allies". Then, with a "Deer" escort, according to one of the US members, he transferred himself to Hanoi, where he had never been before.

Mr Patti got to Hanoi first, ostensibly by a "mercy train" to care for prisoners-of-war and to make arrangements for the Japanese surrender to Chiang Kai-shek's army. Since he was soon followed by two other teams entrusted with the same missions, and spent a negligible amount of time on either, what he personally achieved was to deter the Communists, with no less so, Mr Patti says, from being "too easily taken over". The day Ho himself arrived, the Communists organized a military welcome for the Americans as a demonstration to the locals, and

got that news through to the Emperor, still hesitating in his palace at Huế whether to "surrender" to Ho's emissaries. A week later, four hours after MacArthur took the Japanese surrender at Tokyo, Ho proclaimed the Democratic Republic of Vietnam with himself at its head, to the salutes of Patti, his team, and two US Air Force Lightnings overhead, while the Allied prisoners-of-war, except for two or three Americans, still languished behind the Japanese barbed wire up the road.

Had Patti overstepped his orders? Repeatedly he says he had no precise ones. If a campaign against the Japanese in Indochina had ever been planned, intelligence would have been essential, and once the Japanese had interned all the French, Vietnamese informers sounded promising. But no such plan was drawn up. Later on, after Ho's proclamation, Patti was summoned to Chungking to account for events and mentioned "political warfare" as still being his task; he never answered the question what that entailed - or the question against whom, after Japan's defeat, it was to be carried out. OSS teams were quite unaccountable, and Patti admits that they joy-ride around Indochina in the hope of "taking surprise" even when ordered not to. Mountbatten, who had charge of the surrender at Saigon instead of Chiang Kai-shek, ordered his Allied Control Commissioner there, General Gracie, to accept an OSS team; but its leader made such a nuisance of himself that Gracie ordered him out - too late, alas, to save him from ambush and murder by the Communists he had rashly trusted, rather like his fellow-officer John Birch (commemorated in the John Birch Society) in Kiangsu. Official US policy was neither to help nor to hinder the French restoration of government. Patti saw, and still sees, no inconsistency in his helping the Communists to "rapidly seize power and improvise some form of government".

In the prophetic words of Sir Stafford Cripps (Ho's unwitting helper on that occasion in Hong Kong) to the House of Commons.

As Cripps had foreseen, the three weeks between the atom bombs and the Tokyo surrender led to a hiatus of legitimate authority all over South East Asia; while the victors feverishly assembled garrisons and sea transports, power was there for the seizing men on the spot. Some Japanese commanders, waiting for their captivity to begin, saw in this gap the chance for a parting blow against their conquerors, and landed out guns. The only Allied forces ready to move were the mutually jealous intelligence groups - the American SACO, AGAS and OSS, the Franco-British "Force 136", the exclusively French "MS". Every-

body's first object was to fly in and take stock of prisoner-of-war conditions; but, inevitably, political aims impinged - defensively, on the British and French, relying on the 1947 Hague Convention about the duty of occupation forces to "ensure public order and safety while respecting the laws in force"; king-making aims for the Americans, fired by the discredited "Lex Wellington" that "conquerors can do as they like". In French eyes, constitutional changes ought to wait for calm to be restored; the Americans saw a golden opportunity to reshape a bit of Asia. Jean Sainteny, head of the OSS in Indochina, was a de Gaulle abhorred in purging *collaborateurs* but he persuaded the Americans to let him accompany Patti to Hanoi; his 1954 memoirs dwell on his subsequent griefs. Now Patti indulges in page after page of *Schadenfreude* over Sainteny's discomfiture by the Communists. Doubtless Sainteny was a trying intellectual snob; Patti was rougher hewn - insensitive, for example, to the anguish of French wives and children at the mercy of the mobs.

It is true that the French war record in Indochina was ambiguous, but that of the Vietnamese, including the Communists, was no less so. One trouble may have been language: Patti says he spoke French fluently; if so, how can he bear to commit so many *fautes d'orthographe* in his

book? He is just as hostile towards Gracie, who was outside his military "theatre" but inside the sphere of Ho Chi Minh's influence and consequently of his own daily concerns at that time. Both Gracie and Sainteny, Patti declares, were unfitted for their duties by long residence in the colonial East - evidently he does not know that Gracie went on to become Commander-in-Chief in independent Pakistan, and Sainteny the admiral and eventually the mourner of Ho - whereas he himself acted with the singlemindedness of one who had not set foot in Asia before. Ten years ago, somebody unkindly published an adverse army report on Patti, which said that he was both ingratiating and self-important and took too much on himself. Ironically, he still shows insensitivity to Ho's true position, for he insists that Ho was "a nationalist before a communist", desperately trying to align his newborn nation with the West - the worst "strategic compromise" a Communist could be damned with in Leninist circles.

Why Viet Nam? runs to 300 words for every hour Patti was in that country. It draws on a memory refreshed from his secret reports ("collected" mainly through Ho's interpreters, but partly from local French socialist informers friendly to Ho) and supplemented with matter suggested by researchers in the USA sympathetic to Ho; it ignores Communist publications intended for Asian eyes. Certainly, Patti corrects or amplifies earlier and sketchier accounts: for example the much-reprinted snap of himself and Vo Nguyen Giap saluting together turns out to be of the parade on August 26, not September 2, 1945; on the other hand, a portrait of Ho which Patti ascribes to the latter date looks like a montage of 1954. A novel piece of information is that a Soviet

counterpart of Patti, Comrade Soloviev, preceded him to Hanoi in order to protect Russian prisoners-of-war from the Foreign Legion; despite "several hours over vodka", however, Patti tells us no more about what became of this surprising individual and his "wards", or about his relations with Ho.

Indeed, for all the space lavished on hearsay about Gracie's iniquities far away, there are a lot of omissions about things near by. How did Ho and Giap get to Hanoi and which OSS men accompanied them? Did Ho really offer food to the masses whom Giap had deliberately terrified with "burnt earth" a few days earlier, as a member of "Deer" has alleged? Did the Vietnamese populace of Hanoi really welcome the tribal guerrillas as co-nationals? Who was on the rostrum with Ho on September 2 - was the deposed Emperor there? Cornered in the BBC interview about the two Lightnings, Patti admitted they flew over at the right moment, "by accident"; but he does not mention them in *Why Viet Nam?* And among all these hours and hours of lunches and dinners and late-night chats with Ho, how can he have forgotten the interview his chief from Chungking had in mid-September with a "Ho flanked by the Emperor and by Prince Souphannouvong" from Laos? Is it because that occasion led to Patti's own recall? He says the whole OSS agency was wound up the day he left Hanoi; but it was not, and he had a successor. He is incensed at Gaullist charges that the OSS had an eye to investment in Ho's new state. All the same, "using capitalists to destroy capitalism" was a "tactical compromise" which Lenin applauded in 1920, and General Donovan, commander of the OSS, had been one of the Americans Lenin had in mind; Mao dealt the same card to the

The peak of Stalinism

By Ronald J. Hill

T. H. RIGBY, ARCHIE BROWN and PETER REDDAWAY (Editors):
Authority, Power and Policy in the USSR
Essays dedicated to Leonard Schapiro
207pp. Macmillan. £15.
0 333 25702 2

As Professor of Political Science with special reference to Russia at the USI from 1963 until 1975, Leonard Schapiro dominated Soviet political studies in Britain. In addition, through his voluminous writings - most notably his unsurpassed "biography" of the Soviet Communist Party (1960; 2nd edition 1970) - he earned a world reputation which ranked him alongside such scholars as the late Merle Fainsod and John Hazard, in a generation struggling to make sense of the horrors of Stalinism and to explain the Soviet Union to a perplexed world.

The scope and range of these essays and the reputations of their authors - some of whom are long-established authorities, while others are now beginning to make their mark as "professional students" of Soviet affairs (a phrase once used by Schapiro about himself) - bear witness to the tremendous impact Schapiro has made on successive generations of graduate students, and to the affection with which his former pupils and colleagues regard him.

This is a fine volume, combining essays of impeccable scholarship and polish with more argumentative pieces - it is incidentally a good advertisement for the standard of Russian and Soviet studies in British universities at a time when the discipline appears to be under serious threat. (All but two of the contributors are British-based.)

The various authors have each sought their own understanding of the complexity of Soviet political

life, and in some cases the points they emphasize differ markedly from those stressed in Schapiro's own work: Archie Brown's exploration of the political culture of Soviet society is a case in point. There is nevertheless a fitting unity about this collection, for all the contributors share a common focus on the theme that has so concerned Schapiro throughout his career: broadly stated, how the Soviet political system reached its peak under Stalin, and how (and how far) the features of "high Stalinism" have been maintained by his successors.

Thus Neil Harding, in examining Bukharin's arguments in favour of an "industrialized state", explores the theoretical debate which produced a justification for Stalin's system. Richard Taylor examines the development of the propaganda media, notably the cinema, which were used to inculcate acceptance of the system in a largely illiterate and poor country. Alec Nove, in characteristically combative style, focuses on central planning - a key element in the Stalin "model", but one whose usefulness has increasingly been questioned in the communist world, despite what Nove sees as the naive faith in its effectiveness on the part of Trotskyites and others. Graeme Gill focuses on the cult of the leader, as a means of acquiring the political authority which Stalin's organization at capacity alone could not confer. Anthony Kemp-Welch records the effective destruction of scholarship as a potential counterweight to the irrationality which characterized Stalin's rule, while T. H. Rigby argues persuasively, in his Weberian analysis of the basis of authority in the Soviet Union, that the nature of "rationality" in the Soviet system needs to be carefully examined if we are to understand the Soviet approach to power.

Moving on from the Stalin period, Archie Brown traces the apparent decline in the real power of the top party office, after Stalinism reached its peak at the time of the Second World War (and incidentally draws perceptive comparisons with British prime ministers). And finally Peter Reddaway - whose essay is less an interpretation than a meticulous account of recent policy - focuses on dissent, which he sees as a touchstone of how far the Soviet leaders have moved away from Stalinist assumptions and methods.

The essays complement one another and are ably tied together in Rigby's theoretical chapter. However, they provide more insight into the way the Soviet system has developed in the past than into its present functioning or its future, and tend to concentrate on the most distasteful features of that system. The assumption, expressly stated by Reddaway, that the present Soviet leaders base their methods of rule on axioms dating from Lenin's time, really needs to be demonstrated (and, indeed, that assumption, if accurate, has depressing implications for the prospect of political change in the future).

But the more complex analysis of policy-making implied in Reddaway's analytical chart (page 185) points to a potentially more fruitful approach to understanding the Soviet system. This would need to take into account not only precedents and traditions, and the views of various individual and institutional actors, but also the profound, interrelated problems which require resolution through public policy: Rigby is right in seeing policy as a process, carried on in several areas simultaneously.

At a time when ideology in politics and value-judgments in the social sciences are equally unfashionable, this volume serves to remind us of two important truths. Schapiro's own outstanding contribution demonstrates the first of these: that a concern for values does not conflict with the highest standards of scholarship. The second truth, of which Rigby again reminds us, is that ideology retains its significance in Soviet politics. The present leaders are committed to the building of communism, however remote and uncertain its appearance may be; they are not simply anxious to retain power for its own (or their own) sake, but wish to do something positive with it, a point that is too frequently discounted.

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Business studies

By Alan Bold

IAN J. BURTON:
The Runner
145pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson £6.50
0 297 77960 9

The first novel is a literary phenomenon of little interest to the general public, but of intense significance to critics. Novelty, aptly enough, is an essential ingredient of the first novel: if the writer makes a favourable impression he may be required, subsequently, to produce a planned sequel rather than a solitary sequel. For failure to do so he can be cruelly written off as an over-ambitious arriviste.

Ian Burton's first novel, *Out of Season*, was a New Fiction Society Choice and an object of general critical admiration. He is already working on his third novel and offers this, his second, as a fair example of the kind of art he is practising. *The Runner* is not in any sense an experimental or exploratory work. An assured narrative on a contemporary theme, it is shaped by convention and sustained by inside knowledge.

At thirty-two Burton is the same age as Neil Telford, one of the principal leading men in his novel, and there is a strong autobiographical element in the story. Burton is Birmingham-bred while the unspecified urban setting of the novel is impersonal enough to suit his native place: "the city... the glittering towers and the on-off neon strips, the back alleys... the suburbs". Before he became a novelist Burton worked in a factory, first as a labourer then as a white-collar worker spiralling upwards into business studies. Throughout this book there is an authentic awareness of the hierarchy of the factory system and an emphasis on the sacred importance of official status.

Initially the book reads like an account of the factory treadmill, with its dehumanizing pressures and intolerable strain. The old ideal of men mastering machines has been transformed: the men in this novel are at the mercy of machines. Four men, in particular, have submerged their personalities so totally that they are in danger of acquiring forever the mere labels that define the departments they run. Neil Telford is Advertising, Alan Hanson is Production, Edgar Broughton is Sales and David Myers is Despatch. This competitive quartet play the game by the rules laid down for them. They live, virtually, in and for the factory which is also "a village, a bloody eight to five village". Life outside the factory is alarming in its unplanned flexibility. Each of the leading men, therefore, has a serious emotional problem and each problem is systematically examined as the novel progresses.

Thematically, Ian Burton has built his book around the popular metaphor of remunerative work as a rat-race. Burton's principals are running for all they are worth. Simultaneously they are haunted by the symbolic figure of the eponymous Runner, who runs for his life in a commercially competitive race. The book opens with tears being shed over the latest victim of this race - the Factory Supervisor has died of sheer exhaustion - yet the others continue to run, undeterred by this setback. If anything they go faster for there is the possibility of internal promotion. This makes it immensely difficult for the four main characters to deal with the personal crises in their lives: their various attempts to do so give the book its tension and edge.

Burton's prose has three quite different textures. First, there is his use of hyperbole: "He glanced at its watch. The digital figures throbbed on his wrist, directly into his bloodstream, as if it was minutes and seconds being pumped around his body. But time does not coagulate. It is circulating around clock faces." Second, there is his symbolism: "It is a sign... Here is the Runner, yesterday's runner, breaking clear. But is he hunter or hunted? He runs in pursuit of the silhouette riders.

The silhouette horsemen - pieces of night on horseback - running with the speed of time - for tomorrow." Last, there is the naturalistic prose that carries the burden of the narrative: "She squeezed the washing-up liquid into the bowl and watched the hot water swirl up the bubbles. She worked slowly and steadily, concentrating on the task."

If that three-in-one stylistic solution sounds too pat and neatly packaged for imaginative fiction then that is a prejudice Burton can cope with. Still, there is an identikit appearance about parts of the novel - perhaps as a result of the risk the author was willing to take in his desire to produce a prose equivalent of the tedious factory life. He eschews the panoramic method but instead focuses on

Knights in blue denim

By Stoddard Martin

RICHARD PECK:
New York Time
220pp. Gollancz. £6.95.
0 575 03011 9

Barbara Renfrew is a thirty-eight-year-old housewife in an upper middle-class suburb on Chicago's North Side. Barbara married her college sweetheart at the end of her senior year and thus missed the era of "alternative lifestyles". Barbara's husband, Tom, now an insurance executive, was a "jock" in college and a frat-man and adheres to pre-1960s values, including the one that adultery must remain covert. The Renfrews are childless. Barbara's days are taken up cataloguing the brand names of accoutrements in her neighbours' houses. Suburban Chicago receives the treatment Cynia McPadden gave Marin County in *The Serial*. Then one evening Tom announces that the insurance company is transferring him to New York; Barbara's quiet life will never be the same.

The title of this book refers to the setting; the theme is not New York so much as the lifestyle New Yorkers like Barbara Walters have been purveying as fashionable lately: older woman, younger man. Shortly after they have exchanged their North Shore Tudor for an East Side Co-op, Tom announces to Barbara that he is in love with their ex-neighbour, Marlene Millsap, and is going back to Chicago to be with her. Left alone in the Gothic metropolis, Barbara is soon reduced to pounding her head on the floor. Fortunately for her, this is the world of fiction, where an

Empty-handed

By Julia Briggs

MAURICE RENARD:
The Hands of Orlac
Translated by Iain White
301pp. Souvenir. £6.95.
0 285 62461 X

Maurice Renard's novel, *The Hands of Orlac*, tells the story of a famous concert pianist who loses his hands in a railway accident and has them successfully grafted back on. But are they really his? Unlikely though such an operation still seems, sixty years after the book was written, the idea itself is a powerful one and it was dramatized very effectively as a silent film with Conrad Veidt, and rather less memorably on two subsequent occasions. None of the film versions can convey how closely the novel conforms to the *grand guignol* convention, employing three different interpretations of its events: one apparently supernatural, including ghosts, vanishing daggers and visible nightmares; a second rational but macabre beyond belief; and the last

a few interiors, introduces a minimum of locations, and indulges in one or two flashbacks. The result resembles relief-work. Telford, Hanson, Broughton and Myers are interchangeable products of the factory system; ambition unites them and only age-difference divides them.

Perhaps Ian Burton's greatest strength is his ability to bring an other-worldly atmosphere to his ostensibly realistic situations. Workday pressures are familiar enough to most readers; in *The Runner* reality is frequently seen from the viewpoint of the disturbed dreamer afraid to wake up into an everyday nightmare. Burton demonstrates considerable technical skill in a novel which must be classed as an impressive - though not record-breaking - performance.

Ed Kimbell is a twenty-three-year-old graduate of Cornell, with an MA in horticulture. At one point Barbara refers to him as a *Playgirl* centrefold; at another a giggling waitress asks him if anyone has ever told him he looks like John Denver. Ed turns the sooty roof of the Co-op into an enchanting garden and beleaguers Barbara into a blooming, second mother and wife. It's an old sign of female uptightness: being transformed by male sensuality; only Ed is a housebound, adorable Stanley Kowalski, and Barbara has a wit entirely beyond Stella, or Blanche Dubois for that matter. Tennessee Williams's phallic worship lurks in the shadows; that there isn't nothing wrong with a dame that can't be remedied by the love of a potent man is the neo-1950s message.

New York Time has been written by formula for the women's magazine market. The prose is facile, witty, compulsive. The continual references to high school, TV, and brand names make a homey ambience for middle-brow American housewives. The development from suburbia to city, marriage to affair, lack-of-confidence to fulsome pander to cozier fantasy. Real and painful problems like separation, divorce, parenthood for a single mother, ageing and death are "solved" with miraculous flippancy. This book was written by Madison Avenue: it has the sheen and wit of the best advertising prose, and pushes the same optimistic humbug.

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involving a complex confidence trick, accompanied by unlikely tricks and disguises. All must be congruent, however far-fetched or inadequately motivated, and the total effect is not unlike that of a showy but unmisal coloratura aria.

It is, perhaps, a little hard to judge only from a translation, but Renard's style seems as elaborately and implausibly Gothic as his plotting; his fondness for rhetorical questions, exclamations and similar picturesque figures of speech produces a somewhat indigestible result. Here, for example, is part of a description of an old-fashioned gramophone: "From the fearsome, gaping horn, from the enormous convoluted flower that exhaled sounds rather than odours, the clamorous spectre of a time that was dead and gone burst ceaselessly forth... Oh! The melancholy, the fantastic melancholy of that invention that freezes sound... The huge black flower, the sonorous flower that had plunged its roots into the tomb, could not have had a more profound effect." Seldom, one might think, has the dead hand of Edgar Allan Poe lain so heavily across the pages of his disciples.

Brotherly love

By Christopher Edwards

PAT MCGRATH:
Stray Cats from a Wayward World
220pp. W. H. Allen. £7.95.
0 491 02498 3

When we first meet Nicholas, the main character of Pat McGrath's novel, he is neither stray nor wayward. The adopted son of a suburban couple from Essex, he chooses the low as the career most likely to lift him above his lower-middle-class background. Studious and ambitious, he becomes an articled clerk in a well-known firm of City solicitors, Marlon Marbyss & Co.

Suddenly a mysterious young man, who refuses to leave any message, tries to make contact with him. When they do meet, Nicholas is amazed to discover that the caller is his younger brother, Tom, adopted as a baby by a Liverpool working-class family. Tom is scruffy, vaguely left-wing, uneducated (but well read), unemployed; he smokes dope, writes poetry, lives in a squat in Hackney and has been "inside". It is not clear how far McGrath realizes that Tom, for all his on-the-roadist spontaneity, is as much of a stereotype as his petit-bourgeois, pin-striped brother, but the formal contrast between them is clear enough. "I approve of social mobility," Nick says. "I wouldn't waste me time with all that (sic) status bollocks". Tom replies. Nevertheless, they become friends, intrigued, in part, by the realization that their roles could so easily have been reversed.

Through his relations with Tom, Nick is introduced to life in modern urban England: drug abuse (Tom's

girlfriend is in a Drug Rehabilitation Unit), unemployment (Tom's foster father has lost his job on Merseyside), inadequate housing, etc. McGrath is clearly a novelist who "cares". Such issues can, of course, disclose material which would be the proper concern of an author. The objection to them here is that they appear to be no more than items snatched from a social worker's short list.

Still, as new data in Nick's experience, they succeed in altering his attitudes more than would, say, a share transfer deal in the Cayman Islands. When Tom is charged with murder Nick helps prepare the defence. The Old Bailey trial which follows is predictable rather than tense, although McGrath does handle the conventions of courtroom drama competently enough - the obtuseness of the Judge, the despotism of the Prosecuting Counsel, the dismay in the gallery when the impossible verdict is returned. The trial is also the key moment in Nick's development, the catalyst which changes him from a City solicitor into a Law Centre counsellor.

The author eventually brings about Tom's acquittal through a tired old device, but it is the style of writing which really kills the book: a monochrome relaying of facts and feelings, top heavy with platitudes. True, on occasions McGrath gives a new angle to a hackneyed phrase so that it catches the light: "I woke up with eagles in my guts rather than butterflies". He also succeeds in suggesting something of the plausible infallibility of the traditional private dick in the figure of Goldberg, the managing clerk in Nick's office. Apart from this, though, the novel hardly rises above the level of a dramatized case history; after finishing it I wasn't sure whether to return it to the bookshelf or to the filing-cabinet.

given the entries that competitions encourage these days and the great numbers of unsolicited manuscripts that land on magazine editors' desks. For example, a literary magazine like *Stand*, which publishes sixteen to twenty stories a year, receives annually well over one thousand submissions; *Punch*, publishing around fifty stories a year, selects those from getting on for six hundred submissions. There is a discrepancy here and one feels that the net for *Scottish Short Stories* might be cast a little wider.

The general impression this year's stories provide is of a craft practised capably but unambitiously. The stories tend to be well-written and exciting, but, finally, not very exciting. There are, however, exceptions. James Campbell in "The Half Bottle of Champagne" is the "Enemy of Man" contributes a robustly comic portrayal of a young writer's relationship with his landlord, who is profanely abusive about his lodger's literary abilities ("You can't even write [poetry] with *The Oxford Book of Verse* and a sheet of tracing paper"), and who has a drunkenly loyal - but imaginary - acquaintance with the "greats" of twentieth century literature. Robin Jenkins, in "She Had to Laugh", writes effectively and with great economy about a skinny Glasgow tart who serves the American sailors from the Holy Loch; she accepts a postal offer of marriage from an erstwhile client in order to escape her drab and unhappy existence only to wind up living in an isolated gas station in the middle of a Californian desert. The fact that the two best stories come from, respectively, the youngest and the oldest contributors may, one hopes, say something about the country's strength-in-depth.

The overall policy of this worthwhile series (now in its ninth year) continues much as before: a blend of reliable, familiar names and the work of lesser-known and younger writers, though, as Willis Pickard stresses in his preface, the final obligation has always been to publish the best of the stories submitted each year. This year the submissions totalled, so we are informed, approximately one hundred and thirty, out of which the final eighteen were chosen. On the face of it, this seems to be a remarkably low number,

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Friends of the National Libraries

By John Foggles

The Friends of the National Libraries was founded fifty years ago to give to libraries and record offices the same kind of support which museums and art galleries received from the National Art Collections Fund. To celebrate its golden jubilee an appeal has been launched. If the society is to fulfil its purposes it is vital that its funds be increased and many more members enrolled. Its income has always been small, the number of members never as high as a thousand, yet its achievements have been remarkable. The earliest were, indeed, spectacular. The Friends led the campaign to secure the *Codex Sinaiticus* and the *Paston Letters* for the Library of the British Museum, in the latter case subscribing three-quarters of the cost. In the 1930s the museum, the chief beneficiary of the Friends' generosity at that time, received many remarkable gifts: the manuscript of Trollope's autobiography, the remaining scraps of Wilfred Owen's poems, and a number of important sixteenth-century English books.

Since the war the work of the Friends has changed in several important ways. The number of institutions that have benefited has increased enormously: more than two hundred of them up and down the country have received outright gifts or grants towards acquisitions. At the same time the support given to the larger libraries has become small, in some cases only nominal, though the society has continued to lead or give support to appeals on their behalf, and has continued to act as the channel through which collections have passed to them: the Henry Davis bequest to the British Library in this way and parts of the Broxbourne Library were presented to the British Library, the Bodleian, and the Cambridge University Library. The grants of money the Friends are able to make to these institutions are now very small in relation to the much increased purchase grants available from government funds. Yet Treasury grants are not always large enough, especially in the urgent and unpredictable conditions of the sale rooms and sometimes even the small contribution is useful. Towards the £42,000 necessary to buy the Wordsworth and Coleridge manuscripts for Dove Cottage the Friends could give only £750, but that was a large proportion of the society's income. The appeal which the Friends led, however, elicited £18,000 from an anonymous benefactor which made the acquisition possible.

Membership has remained at much the same level during fifty years when the constituency from which it should be drawn has expanded enormously. The growth of historical and literary studies at the universities has very much increased the numbers of people to whom membership would be an appropriate demonstration of gratitude for the services and resources of a wide range of research collections, all of them in need of support. Although subscriptions have increased, they have not kept pace with inflation - particularly not with the inflation in the price of books and manuscripts.

In recent years the most valuable work the society has done has been to make small, but strategically effective, grants to local record offices. With the aid too of money made available from the government's Purchase Grant Fund, such repositories have been able to mop up, usually at auction, single items or small groups of documents of local interest which are best kept with more of the same in the locality to which they refer.

But the Friends must not be content with performing this function alone, so much less ambitious than that foreseen by the founders of the society. The phrase "the national heritage" is used a good deal nowadays as a catchphrase, but it is especially applicable to several classes of

books and manuscripts intimately bound up with the history and traditions of the nation; and these books and manuscripts are now in particular danger. A number of collections of family papers on deposit in local record offices or libraries have recently been withdrawn by their owners and sold at auction, generally for very large sums. It is difficult not to believe there will be many more sold in the next twenty years. Other collections, still in private hands, are also being put on the market, generally to settle the liabilities of capital transfer tax. These sales are not reprehensible, but they are unfortunate. They can all too easily lead to the dispersal of historically important collections. It goes without saying that a collection relating to one family, or to the administration of estates in one area is of much greater value if it is kept together. But it is likely to be scattered if it is sold at auction.

Collections of printed books have also been withdrawn by their owners and dispersed. The Evelyn Library possessed special coherence and its recent break-up is a grievous example of the damage that can be done. When whole collections or valuable individual volumes are thus withdrawn the institutions which previously housed them are generally quite unable to find the large sums necessary to buy them; and such sales have an unfortunate side effect also, in that they may well make the institutions reluctant in future to accept insecure deposits, and make them at least unwilling to spend time and money listing and repairing them.

The fiscal advantages of sales by private treaty to national or local repositories, benefiting as they do both seller and buyer, have sometimes ensured the survival of a col-

lection intact in its place of deposit. These advantages should be made even greater and one hopes that the Government will see the need to increase them. In general terms, though, the current situation is bleak. Many record repositories have only a few hundred pounds a year to spend. Even the largest and best-endowed libraries cannot easily raise the necessary sums. What they certainly cannot do is raise them repeatedly. The time is not propitious, moreover, for institutions supported by public funds to ask for large amounts of extra money from government or local authorities.

In this situation the Friends of the National Libraries have a special part to play. They do not believe that the only people who care about this part of our heritage are the small number of local supporters already enrolled in the society. They

Premio Bancarella, where only book-sellers vote, and the winner - always a popular bestseller - receives, instead of a cash prize, a wider distribution on all the bookstalls in the country. Most buyers of Signor Tralli's *guida* will not be competing in these big events. Smaller ambitions here get their due, and many provincial towns, seaside resorts, even villages - San Vito dei Normanni (Brindisi); Boscoreale (Napoli); Caiba (Trieste); Campofranco (Caltanissetta); Castellammare del Golfo (Trapani), to name but a few - strive to cater, as it were, for minority tastes. With the possible exception of pornography, all literary forms are considered suitable. Four prizes at least are offered for children's books; three for fiction or poetry about mountains; six for religious verse; two for unperformed plays; and one

at least for prose or poetry, on the subjects of crime, sport (this award being offered by CONI, Italy's Olympic Committee), the Resistance, wine (1 million lire, offered by the magazine *Enochobby*), bureaucracy (the "Travet" prize, offered for a short story dealing with the office or family life of a civil servant); camping, peasant life, fun-fairs (3 million lire, to a newspaper story or television script dealing with "the social, cultural, and ecological functions of fun-fairs", offered by Lunceur, Rome's biggest amusement park). There is even a prize inscribed to Il Medico Poeta, for a poem composed by a practising doctor - entries to be submitted in typescript on prescription sheets.

So far, you might think that Signor Tralli's catalogue makes fascinating reading. But unfortunately the great majority of the prizes he lists are less

colourful; in fact most do not aspire to originality at all. Eight out of ten competitions invite the submission of a poem, a group of poems, or a short story - unpublished, not too long, and often, in the vernacular - of any kind, provided that its author is prepared to pay a fee (generally a "reading fee", of about £3 - £5 for each entry. Furthermore, most of these announcements do not promise a precise amount of cash for the winners; some vaguely promise "works of art", or medals, as well as glory. Ennio Flaiano used to say that no Italian ever reads a book, but that every Italian is always writing one. If this is true, and if a sizable proportion of these muck, inglorious, Dantes seize their opportunity, one may be led to suspect that others, besides writers, publishers and booksellers, stand to profit from "literature".

Mr Davis gives us descriptive notes on each of the literary manuscripts, fiction and non-fiction, adding references to the detailed textual work that has been done on some of them by himself and other American scholars. A short section details the significantly annotated books from Waugh's library, including *The Unquiet Grave* with pungent marginalia that deserve detailed attention from students of Conrad and Waugh alike. Not all publicist details are up to date: references to items published in Donat Gallagher's *A Little Order* might have been welcome, and information about omissions from Michael Davies's *Diary* text (indications of passages left out for "literary" or "humanitarian reasons") could have been inserted.

Mark Amory's edition of the *Letters* was only a selection of the available material, but this catalogue apparently went to press before it was published, so no details could be given of which letters were included. The core of the catalogue is a calendar of all the Waugh letters at Austin, the bulk of them to A. D. Peters and his business associates. Many of the letters are only postcards, but it is clear even from the (strong) in-line nineteenth-century illustrated books and the ancillary objects that help to ensure primacy for the collections at Austin. There is no archival information about the provenance of the documents catalogued here, though they come from several sources and seem to have arrived at Austin at different times - even dates of acquisition would have been useful - and it would have been useful to have had a note on the Trust set up by Waugh ("The Save The Children Fund", my own children, of course), which owned at least some of the literary manuscripts; its business is discussed frequently in the listed correspondence.

As a whole, these Peters files form as yet an under-exploited biographical and bibliographical source.

Potential scholars should not be misled by Davis's catalogue into thinking that the Peters letters consist mainly of items by Waugh himself. They would form an admirable source for the comprehensive bibliography, preferably with the range and rigour of the Soko series, that is so urgently needed.

Although the catalogue has been so long in preparation, it bears many signs of having been too hastily seen through the press, and is awash with literal misprints. The *Sunday Telegraph* may be an abbreviated airmail edition, and "Dame Ethel Smith" of the very first entry was certainly a high-octane, volatile personality. Clearly much more remains to be told of the Humanities Research Center's Waugh collection than is vouchsafed to us in this catalogue of part of it.

A Bibliography of Printed Works Relating to Oxfordshire by E. H. Cordes and D. H. Merry (189pp. Oxford University Press, 1979, £8.50.) which has recently been published as New Series Volume XXVIII is a supplementary volume to New Series Volume XI which was published in 1955. Works on the University and the City of Oxford are not included. The books are classified in general subjects such as "Natural History", "Topography", "Social History" and "Religion" and under more specific subjects within the general classification. Newspapers, directories, almanacs and books on individual localities are covered in the volume. There is an Index of Subjects and a general index.

Waugh out West

By Alan Bell

ROBERT MURRAY DAVIS:
A Catalogue of The Evelyn Waugh Collection At The Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin
360pp. New York: Whitson.
0 8785 194 7

A substantial purchase from the Evelyn Waugh estate of his library (including the furnishings of the room itself), and his carefully preserved literary manuscripts, backed by the acquisition of the voluminous Waugh files of his literary agent and several sets of other writers' papers containing groups of Waugh letters, has placed the Humanities Research Center, Austin, at the head of all repositories of Evelyn Waugh materials. Robert Murray Davis provides a serviceable guide to the manuscript parts of the Center's holdings, but except for a few brief introductory sentences, gives no account of Waugh's own library (strong in line nineteenth-century illustrated books) and the ancillary objects that help to ensure primacy for the collections at Austin. There is no archival information about the provenance of the documents catalogued here, though they come from several sources and seem to have arrived at Austin at different times - even dates of acquisition would have been useful - and it would have been useful to have had a note on the Trust set up by Waugh ("The Save The Children Fund", my own children, of course), which owned at least some of the literary manuscripts; its business is discussed frequently in the listed correspondence.